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ABSTRACT

This book presents a guide to help teachers manage the multitude of diverse tasks that make up a busy school day. Practical ideas from classroom teachers help educators organize their time and memory. The book offers checklists, rubrics, forms, charts, and reproducible materials to free teachers from having to remember every detail. There are 12 chapters: (1) "Organizing Your Time and Memory," (2) "Buried Under Administrative Paperwork?" (3) "Managing Instructional Print Material," (4) "Corralling Nonprint Materials," (5) "Dejunking: Taking the Cure," (6) "Decisions: From Simple to Complex," (7) "Organizing Your Teaching," (8) "Helping Students Learn to Organize Themselves," (9) "Teaching Students with Special Needs," (10) "Working with Parents," (11) "Requesting Assistance," and (12) "Organizational Strategies for Your Soul." (Contains 22 references.) (SM)

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Taming the Time Stealers

Tricks of the Trade
From Organized Teachers

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Taming the Time Stealers

Taming the Time Stealers

*Tricks of the Trade
From Organized Teachers*

M. C. Gore ■ John F. Dowd



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PREFACE

Disorganization is a teacher's great enemy. We call it The Time Stealer (Figure I.1). The Time Stealer can take control of your life as a teacher. The Time Stealer causes you to take work home at night. It causes you to lose kids' papers, notes from parents, and sometimes even your gradebook!

The Time Stealer embarrasses you. It causes you to forget to attend IEP meetings, parent conferences, and team meetings. It causes you to have to apologize to your principal for failing to attend a meeting. It causes you to have to ask your school secretary for second copies of bulletins because you have misplaced your first ones. It causes you to have to send home second copies of permission slips because you lost the signed ones. It causes you to do a sloppy job of writing up narrative progress reports because you kept putting them off until you had more time. The Time Stealer can take control of your life unless you tame it. This book will teach you how.

We became interested in asking organized teachers about their best Time Stealer Tamers after a survey that Millie conducted with one of her education classes. Millie asked her teacher interns: What is the greatest problem that you have to overcome in order to become a more effective teacher? Fully a third of the class said that disorganization and procrastination were their biggest barriers to becoming more effective as teachers. As the students talked about their difficulty with disorganization and procrastination, they decided that their procrastination was more often than not a result of their disorganization.

In order to help the interns become more effective teachers, Millie went to see John, one of her fellow education professors. She told John what their students had said.



Figure I.1. The Time Stealer

John said, "I'm not surprised." Then he pointed out another important reason for teachers to increase their organizational repertoire. He teaches educational administration in addition to techniques of teaching courses, and he said, "With the increasing emphasis on accountability, teachers are going to have to become more organized in order to become more effective. Principals whose teachers don't score well on achievement tests are themselves going to be evaluated poorly. Therefore, principals are going to have to increase the pressure on their teachers for accountability. Disorganized teachers are going to find themselves dismissed. Organized teachers are going to do well."

Millie and John then decided to survey organized teachers about their Time Stealer Tamers and share what they found with their students. As Millie and John began to collect Time Stealer Tamers, they decided that in addition to their students, other teachers would find the information useful. This book is the result.

In the book, we have used the names of teachers who gave us Time Stealer Tamers. Some teachers, however, preferred not to have their real names used, and for those we created fictitious names. All students' names are fictitious. In stories that teachers gave us about their Time Stealers, we have created fictitious names in order to avoid embarrassment to those teachers who were willing to share their experiences with us. In the examples we created to illustrate Time Stealers and Time Stealer Tamers, we used fictitious names. Any resemblance to real persons in our fabricated examples is purely coincidental.

We continue to seek Time Stealer Tamers. If you have a great Time Stealer Tamer, send it to us. We will include it in future editions of this book.



Figure 1.2. The Tamed Time Stealer

You may either e-mail it to us or send it by direct mail to either of the following addresses.

Dr. Millie Gore or Dr. John F. Dowd
Midwestern State University
Wichita Falls, Texas 76308
e-mail: millie.gore@nexus.mwsu.edu or e-mail: fdowdj@nexus.mwsu.edu

Happy Time Stealer Taming! (Figure 1.2)

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In addition to the teachers whose individual names are listed with their contributions, we also would like to thank the following teachers whose organizational tricks of the trade are included in this book: Marvin Peevey, Marjean Cox, Pat Collins, Susan Mayo, Anita Chaney, Margaret Jones, Van Green, Paula Tilker, Jan Carpenter, Shelly Cunningham, Rae Gillan, Kari O'Brien, and April Moreland.

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John F. Dowd is Associate Professor at Midwestern State University where he has taught courses in instructional techniques and educational leadership since 1989. He earned his advanced degrees at Syracuse University. He taught in the public schools for 9 years, was a middle school principal for 3 years, and a superintendent for 11 years. His research interests include decision making, qualitative techniques, and leadership behavior. He conducts many studies for local public schools. He has been married to Sandy Dowd for 35 years. They enjoy skiing, golfing, and visiting their two daughters, Colleen and Erin.

To *Don*, who helps me organize my life around
the things that are important. With love, MG

And to *Sandy*, for all her patience, help,
and understanding. With love, JFD

1

ORGANIZING YOUR TIME AND MEMORY

Time. What a precious commodity the Time Stealers steal from us! In this chapter, we will tell you about some ways of taming the Time Stealers by organizing your time so that you eliminate wasted minutes and therefore have more time for the things in life that are important to you as a teacher: good teaching, mentoring your students, listening to them, and encouraging them.

While it's obvious that organizing time will help you tame the Time Stealers, what's less obvious is that organizing your memory is also crucial in taming the Time Stealers. Forgetting things you're supposed to do and appointments that you're supposed to keep are terrible Time Stealers, too, so the techniques in this chapter are designed to help you organize your memory also. These kinds of techniques have been called First-Generation and Second-Generation organizational aids by Stephen R. Covey in his book, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*. We like Covey's terms!

FIRST-GENERATION ORGANIZATIONAL AIDS

In this section of Chapter 1, we will discuss what are called first-generation organizational aids. They include:

- ☐ To-do lists
- ☐ Checklists
- ☐ Rubrics
- ☐ Telephone memo books

To-Do Lists

To-do lists come in three varieties: (a) basic, (b) ordered, and (c) prioritized. All three types ensure that a task will be remembered, and remembering is a central skill to good organization.

Basic To-Do Lists

Much of what teachers do when they plan is to make to-do lists. Understanding the nature of to-do lists will help teachers receive greater benefit from their to-do lists. The basic to-do list is one that is designed only to make certain that tasks are remembered. When John makes a list of all of the materials that he wants to photocopy before he goes home on Monday night so that they are ready before school on Tuesday morning, he is making a to-do list. He does not care in what order he photocopies the materials, nor does he need to prioritize the photocopying. He simply needs an aid to ensure that he remembers to photocopy everything. If John doesn't write out his photocopying to-do list when he writes out his lesson plan, chances are good that he'll fail to remember something that he's going to need on Tuesday. At best, he will probably have to make an extra trip or two from the workroom back to his classroom to retrieve something that he left behind. Taking a few moments to make a to-do list will save him valuable minutes and effort.

Ordered To-Do Lists

A second type of to-do list orders the tasks without reference to their importance. Millie often had trouble remembering to do all the tasks required at her school before going home in the afternoon. Several times she forgot to lock the windows, and on occasion, she even forgot to close them. She also often forgot to turn down the thermostat and to lock the file cabinet.

One night in the early fall it all came to a head. The room was cold in the morning, but heated up during the day and then cooled off quickly at night. Millie had turned on the heater first thing in the morning. Then, after the room heated up from the southern exposure during the day, she'd

opened the windows. She left at the end of the day with the thermostat on, the windows open, and the file cabinet unlocked. At 10:30 p.m., her phone rang. Her principal was on the other end. "The police called me about open windows in your classroom. I'm at the school now. Your file cabinet is open. You better come on down and look through it to see whether anything important is missing. Also inventory your equipment when you get here so we can tell if anything has been stolen. By the way," he added, "you left the heater on, and all the hot air blew right out the windows. You know we're watching the utility bill!"

Millie dressed frantically and broke the speed limit racing to the school. The policeman and her principal (his hair uncombed, wearing a jumpsuit and house slippers) were waiting for her. She checked out the room and assured them that everything was in order. Driving home, white-knuckled, red-faced with embarrassment, and exhausted, she vowed to write a to-do list of end-of-day activities and post it by the door. Although the list was a great help, Millie discovered that ordering the list was even more useful, because several times after she locked the file cabinet, she discovered that sensitive materials were still on her desk. By listing the tasks in the order that she needed to accomplish them, she saved time and effort.

A second way to use to-do lists is to use them to help students organize their work. When Millie taught first grade, students who were not in the reading group with which she was working had several tasks to accomplish independently or in groups. By numbering the tasks and using rebuses, Millie could make a to-do list that even a first grader who could not read could follow (Figure 1.1).

Prioritized To-Do Lists

Much of what teachers write in their lesson plan book is an ordered to-do list. In actual practice, however, we need prioritized to-do lists because activities often take more or less time than a teacher has allotted for them. When asked what she had learned during her internship semester, one of our interns responded, "I learned that nothing takes the kids as long to do as I think it will take them. Activities I think the kids will finish in a few minutes take half an hour, while they fly through activities that I thought they'd need a half hour to finish!" Prioritizing to-do lists helps us see that the crucial tasks are tackled before the less crucial tasks.

We asked Marilyn, a first grade teacher, how she used prioritized to-do lists. Marilyn said, "I like to have at least ten activities for teaching a new consonant blend or digraph. When I prioritized my list on the day I taught

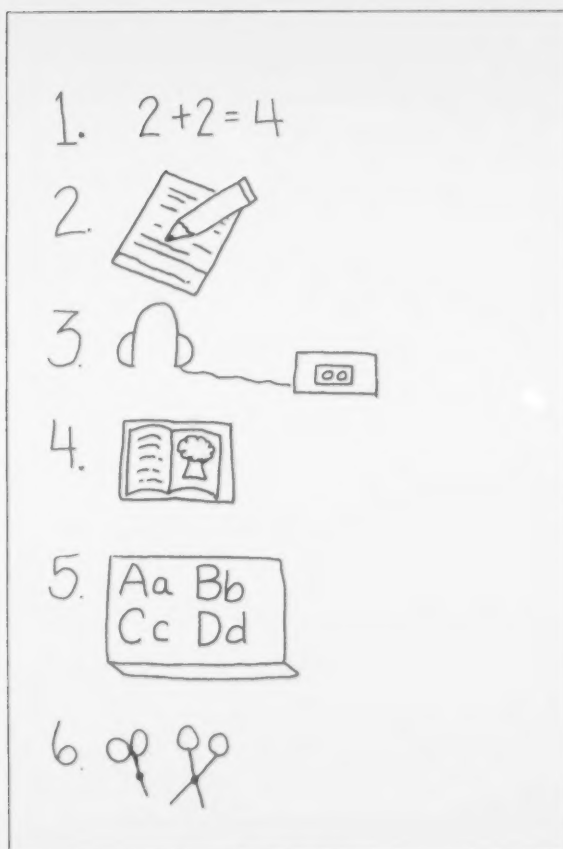


Figure 1.1. Ordered To-Do List

the *sh* digraph, I found I had three activities that were essential: whole-group introduction to the digraph by an analytic lesson, students generating words that have the new sound while I write them on the board, and whole-group practice reading the list of words that the kids nominated. I realized that I had three activities that were important but not essential: singing a song I made up called 'Shh! Don't Shout!', dancing a dance I call 'The Ship Dance,' and cutting pictures of things that start with the *sh* sound out of magazines. I decided that I had three activities that were useful but not important: doing the three different workbook pages in the basal reading series. I also realized that I had two activities that were fun if time permitted them for enrichment or reinforcement: making three-dimensional ships out of construction paper and making a mural of ships at sea." Marilyn told us that by prioritizing her list, she could ensure that the essential and most important activities were accomplished.

Checklists

Six kinds of checklists are useful for teachers. The first one is the class skills checklist. The second type of checklist is the student accountability checklist that teachers use when they give credit for work without assigning a grade. Third is one that is used to record information about the frequency of a student's discrete behavior. The fourth kind of checklist is the continuous behavior checklist that is used to document more subtle student behaviors. The fifth kind is the health and welfare checklist. The sixth is a checklist of the essential elements of a lesson checklist, a checklist that a teacher makes for herself to ensure that she has met the criteria for a lesson.

Class Skills Checklists

Class skills checklists allow you to identify which skills in a subject area have been mastered by which students. You use the checklist to determine who needs reteaching. You can either group the students together to reteach them the skill, or you can assign a student who has mastered the skill to reteach it to a student who has not mastered the skill.

Kayla, a veteran second grade teacher, likes to indicate which students she will group together and reteach herself, and which students will peer tutor other students individually (Figure 1.2). The student number of the student who will be the tutor is inserted in the empty check box of the student who needs to be retaught the skill. The capital T means that the teacher herself will reteach the student, usually in a small group of students having similar skills.

Student Accountability Checklists

A student accountability checklist allows the teacher to hold students accountable for completing a task that does not require an evaluation of the quality of the assignment. For example, Randa, a third grade teacher, assigned all of her students to make and decorate a portfolio box at home and bring it to school. Any way that a student chose to decorate the box was acceptable. "There was no wrong way to do it," said Randa. "Some kids used all the bells and whistles. One girl glued pictures of dalmatians all over hers and then added a rhinestone dog collar. A boy covered his with seashells on a blue background, and in the center he had a big starfish. A very quiet girl chose to cover hers in plain white paper and leave it that way. However a kid wanted to do it, that was okay." In Randa's case, an accountability checklist was an appropriate tool. She simply checked off that a student had turned in a portfolio box.

#	Name	cap sent	cap noun	period	quest mrk	exclam	sub/vrb
01	Marti	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
02	Tomas	T	16	16	✓	✓	16
03	Anita	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
04	Ebony	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
05	Skye	T	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
06	Tonisha	✓	✓	✓	✓	4	✓
07	Andree	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
08	Mikki	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
09	Paul	T	10	✓	✓	✓	✓
10	David	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
11	Phillip	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
12	Miguel	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
13	Gabe	T	15	T	T	15	T
14	Toni	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
15	Summer	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
16	Lesley	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Figure 1.2. Class Grammar Skills Checklist

Discrete Student Behavior Checklists

The discrete and continuous student behavior checklists are tools of the special education teacher who specializes in working with students who have severe behavior problems, but they are very helpful to the general education teacher as well. First we'll discuss the discrete behavior checklist.

Rosemary, an award winning social studies teacher, said, "Focusing on good behaviors and ignoring bad ones is a good rule for teachers, and I pride myself on doing just that. I don't sweat the small stuff and I like to catch the kids being good and focus on the things they do well. But," she cautioned, "when a problem behavior is too important to be ignored because it interferes with the student's ability to be successful, or with other students' ability to be successful, the teacher's job is to intervene. That's when I use a student behavior checklist." She pulled a document out of her file cabinet (Figure 1.3).

"My classroom is highly interactive," she said, "but sometimes the students must work individually and without talking to other students. Todd would turn around and talk to the girl behind him. Not only could he not do his own work, but he was keeping her from doing her work, and he was distracting the students around them. I used a discrete behavior checklist to

Monday
<del> </del>
Tuesday
Wednesday
<del> </del>
Thursday
<del> </del>
Friday
<del> </del> <del> </del>

Figure 1.3. Todd's Checklist of Turning Around and Talking

document how many times he engaged in the behavior over a week's time. Then I sat down with him and showed him the checklist. We went from there."

Continuous Student Behavior Checklists

Millie used a related checklist to document Amanda's problems with staying on task. A continuous behavior checklist differs from a discrete behavior checklist in that it documents behaviors that are not easily counted. For example, frequency of getting out of a seat can be documented by a discrete behavior checklist. In contrast, being off task is a more difficult behavior to document. A student might be off task only once in an hour—all hour long! In order to deal with continuous behaviors, a continuous behavior checklist is the appropriate tool.

Millie gave her second graders an assignment that she anticipated would take 20 minutes. Then she used a checklist to compare Amanda's off-task behavior to that of an average student. Using a two-column checklist, Millie checked whether or not Amanda was on task at 15 and 45 seconds after each minute. She checked whether or not the comparison student was on or off task at 00 and 30 seconds after each minute (Figure 1.4). After

November 15
10:15 English Class

<i>Time</i>	<i>Amanda</i>	<i>Comparison Student</i>
15	+	
30		+
45	+	
0		+
15	+	
30		+
45	0	
0		+
15	0	
30		+
45	0	
0		0
15	0	
30		0
45	0	
0		+
15	+	
30		+
45	0	
0		+
15	0	
30		+
45	0	
0		+
15	+	
30		+
45	+	
0		+
6+		12+

Figure 1.4. On-Task Behavior Checklist for Amanda Mitchelet

keeping the checklists for a week, Millie was ready to try some interventions. (Note that it is important to have a comparison subject in order to make your checklists more valid.)

Another way that a discrete or a continuous behavior checklist helps is by helping a teacher decide whether she has "Worst Kid Syndrome." There will always be one child in a class whom, in your heart of hearts, you like a little less than you like the other children. You may find yourself focusing on that child's shortcomings and ignoring his strong points. When you find yourself criticizing every move he makes, a behavior checklist will help you decide whether the problem lies with his behavior or with the way you are looking at him. When you use a behavior checklist in this way, you must do two checklists: one documenting the behaviors of the target student and one documenting the behaviors of an average, solid student. If you find that the frequency of behaviors of the target student is not more than 40% greater than that of the average student, then the problem may lie with the way you feel about the student, rather than with the student himself.

Health and Welfare Checklists

Another type of student behavior checklist, the health and welfare checklist, documents a case of child neglect. While the two previous checklists recorded frequency of discrete behaviors or duration of continuous behaviors, the checklist for documenting neglect records one or more problems a day for an extended period of time.

Because neglect cases are difficult to make, keep a daily checklist of health and welfare problems of a child whom you suspect is being neglected, problems such being sent to school with a runny nose, wearing dirty clothes, smelling of urine, and so forth (Figure 1.5). If you will keep the list for 3 or 4 weeks, then when you turn your checklist over to the school nurse, she can contact Child Protective Services with enough evidence to get them to open a case.

Essential Elements Checklists

The essential elements checklist helps ensure that you are writing a test that covers everything it needs to cover. When Carl Amandez wrote a test for his social studies students, he wanted to be certain that he tested all five concepts that the unit covered. He listed those five concepts, and every time he wrote a question that assessed one of the concepts, he wrote the number of the question under the concept. When the teacher next door to Carl tried the checklist strategy, she discovered that her test covered three of the concepts thoroughly (four or five questions), one concept nominally (two questions), and omitted one concept altogether. Checklists are an essential tool for writing valid tests (Figure 1.6).

<i>Date</i>	<i>Runny Nose</i>	<i>Dirty Clothes</i>	<i>Urine Smell</i>
February 01	+		
February 02	+	+	+
February 03	+	+	+
February 04	+		
February 05	+		
February 08	+	+	+
February 09	+	+	+
February 10	+	+	+
February 11	+		
February 12	+		
February 15	+	+	+
February 16	+	+	+
February 17	+		
February 18	+		
February 19	+		

Figure 1.5. Health and Welfare Checklist for Anthony Alabi

<i>Location</i>	<i>Place</i>	<i>Regions</i>	<i>Movement</i>	<i>Relationships</i>
1	3	9	2	10
5	4		8	
6	7			

Figure 1.6. Essential Elements Checklist for India Exam

Rubrics

Rubrics are an important part of organizing your instruction, but rubrics are not merely helpful for the teacher. Students appreciate them, too. They like knowing what is expected. They appreciate being well informed about how their work will be graded.

The term *rubric* originally referred to the notes in the margins of hymnals and books of prayer. The notes were often printed with red ink. The notes were reminders of what to do or how to do it. (Examples: "bow your head as you say this," or "sotto voce here.")

A rubric for the classroom is a checklist of what the teacher expects. For example, if students are assigned book reports, the teacher should produce

 Name _____ Date _____

Objective: The student will: (1) choose two books in the same genre, and
(2) compare and contrast them.

Content:

The introduction explains your book selection _____
 Similarities of the two books are explained _____
 Differences between the two books are explained _____
 The conclusion summarizes your comparison _____

Mechanics:

Punctuation is correct _____
 Capitalization is correct _____
 Spelling is correct _____
 Paragraphing is appropriate _____
 Pages are numbered _____
 Margins are all 1" _____
 Handed in on time _____
 At least five pages _____

Grade for this book report _____

Figure 1.7. Book Report Rubric

a book report rubric and distribute it to the students well ahead of the due date.

Book Report Rubrics

To create your first book report rubric, quickly review some of the book reports that you have received from students in the past. List the aspects that you liked, for example, Serena's large margins that provided plenty of room for you to write encouraging notes. Don't forget Sam's page numbers that made it easier to determine when he had written a large enough report. Then create a second list; this time note the things that bothered you. Start with the terrible spelling that made Morey's report tough to read. Include the smudged and messy report that Vengung handed in to you. Now you are well on your way to developing a rubric that will efficiently communicate your preferences to your students. Your secondary grade level book report rubric might look like the example in Figure 1.7.

Student Name _____		Date _____	
Story Rubric			
Draw one:			
	definitely	sort of	not at all
My story had a:			
beginning, middle, end	☐		
main idea	☐		
main character	☐		
setting	☐		
problem	☐		
solution	☐		

Figure 1.8. Happy Face Writing Rubric

Writing Assignment Rubrics

The book report sample provided a space next to each factor to place an evaluation code. Other teachers prefer to circle a yes or a no.

The next rubric is a writing assignment rubric simplified for elementary school use. We like to use happy faces for this level (Figure 1.8).

The next sample writing rubric (Figure 1.9) uses the Y and N abbreviations. It was contributed by a teacher who teaches English and writing by having her class produce a newspaper.

Rather than a yes or no, other teachers prefer a rating scale. The sample in Figure 1.10 is a rubric a teacher created for her students' group project called *In Other Words*. Here, a 5 is the highest rating and a 1 is the lowest rating. Notice that this teacher included subtotals to help in counseling with each student group.

Name of Student Author _____ Date _____

Content

Facts checked	Y	N
Interesting "gotcha" first sentence	Y	N
5 W's covered	Y	N
Adequate supporting details	Y	N

Title

Catchy	Y	N
--------	---	---

Mechanics

Complete, grammatically correct sentences	Y	N
Capitals & punctuation correct	Y	N
Spell checked	Y	N
Written in past tense	Y	N
At least two paragraphs	Y	N

Creativity

Interesting to read	Y	N
Strong verbs used	Y	N
Strong descriptors	Y	N

Figure 1.9. Newspaper Rubric

Some teachers like to have the students rate themselves before the teacher's evaluation. Then they conference and discuss their perceptions. This sample (Figure 1.11) is from a teacher who taught an aeronautics unit.

An even more sophisticated approach is to involve other students in doing peer evaluations. The student author shows his report to another student, who rates it on each of the criteria. Then the same student is the rater for someone else. In this way, students learn writing skills more quickly and thoroughly. Figure 1.12 is an example of a zoo careers report rubric that incorporates a peer review.

Once you begin developing rubrics, the process becomes much easier. You can make your rubrics simpler for slower learning students and more demanding for faster learners. Rubrics are seldom "done." Using word processing, teachers find rubrics convenient and quick to revise as new ideas arise when students ask questions and hand in assignments.

No matter what the topic of your rubric, other teachers will want a copy. This provides you with opportunities for sharing, which is another important dimension of being organized. For example, if four sections of the sixth

Names of Students in the Group: _____

1. Content					
Meaningful	5	4	3	2	1
Effective words	5	4	3	2	1
					C. Subtotal _____
2. Mechanics					
Correct punctuation	5	4	3	2	1
Correct capitalization	5	4	3	2	1
Correct spelling	5	4	3	2	1
					M. Subtotal _____
3. Visual Aids					
Informative	5	4	3	2	1
Attractive	5	4	3	2	1
Colorful	5	4	3	2	1
Error free	5	4	3	2	1
					V. Subtotal _____
4. Task Commitment					
Used time wisely	5	4	3	2	1
Contributed to project	5	4	3	2	1
					T. Subtotal _____
5. Oral Presentation					
Adequate projection	5	4	3	2	1
Adequate pacing	5	4	3	2	1
Innovative	5	4	3	2	1
					O. Subtotal _____
					Total Score _____

Figure 1.10. "In Other Words" Rubric

grade are all studying zoo careers, the most efficient way to teach effectively is to share the work. One teacher might develop a rubric, another teacher might reference all the activities to the school's curriculum guide, another might make the arrangements for a field trip, and the last teacher might make all the parent contacts. When teachers cooperate they all save time, and their students benefit from better instruction. This is a dynamite way to get organized.

Name _____ Date _____

Topic _____

Circle the number of points earned in each category.

	<i>Self-Rating</i>	<i>Teacher Rating</i>
Content:		
accurate	1 3 5	1 3 5
interesting	1 3 5	1 3 5
enough information	1 3 5	1 3 5
feelings shown	1 3 5	1 3 5
use of own words	1 3 5	1 3 5
Task Commitment:		
stayed on task	1 3 5	1 3 5
completed on time	1 3 5	1 3 5
Product:		
creative	1 3 5	1 3 5
neat	1 3 5	1 3 5
Presentation:		
well prepared	1 3 5	1 3 5
creative	1 3 5	1 3 5
projected voice	1 3 5	1 3 5
Total score	_____	_____

Figure 1.11. Aeronautic Rubric

Telephone Memo Books

In the age of accountability, it is important to be able to document each parent contact, each time a parent leaves a message for you, and each time you attempt to contact a parent. A telephone memo book is inexpensive and allows you to keep all of your parent phone calls neatly documented. It also helps remind you to return calls to parents who have left you a message. The memo books can be bought with carbonless copy paper that makes duplicates for you. Then you can put the original in the student's file and keep the copies of all your calls together in your own files.

Name of Student Author _____
 Career _____ Date _____
 Name of student rater _____

	<i>Self-Rating</i>	<i>Peer Rating</i>
Content:		
accurate	1 3 5	1 3 5
sufficient information	1 3 5	1 3 5
organized	1 3 5	1 3 5
interesting	1 3 5	1 3 5
feelings demonstrated	1 3 5	1 3 5
Task commitment:		
stayed on task	1 3 5	1 3 5
completed on time	1 3 5	1 3 5
Product:		
used own words	1 3 5	1 3 5
creative	1 3 5	1 3 5
neat	1 3 5	1 3 5
Presentation:		
well prepared	1 3 5	1 3 5
loud enough for everyone to hear	1 3 5	1 3 5
used expression well	1 3 5	1 3 5
creative	1 3 5	1 3 5

Figure 1.12. Zoo Careers Rubric

Summary

In this section of Chapter 1, we have discussed the purposes of and educational uses for first generation organizational aides. Specifically, we have discussed three kinds of to-do lists (basic, ordered, and prioritized), six kinds of checklists (class skills, student accountability, discrete behavior, continuous behavior, health and welfare, and essential elements), rubrics, and telephone memo books. In the next section, we will discuss second-generation organizational aids.

Check those elements that you now know how to use. Reread the information for any elements about which you feel uncertain.

- ☐ To-do lists
- ☐ Checklists
- ☐ Rubrics
- ☐ Telephone memo books

SECOND-GENERATION ORGANIZATIONAL AIDS

In the last section, we identified first-generation organizational tools. In this section, we will introduce second-generation organizational tools:

- ☐ Calendars
- ☐ Day planners
- ☐ Databases

Whereas first-generation tools organize only the immediate future, second-generation tools organize for the distant future as well as the immediate future. Hyon Lee uses her to-do list to plan what she is going to do in the next hour; she uses her second-generation tool to plan what she is going to do tomorrow or next year.

Calendars

Having a lesson plan book doesn't preclude the need for a portable calendar. The lesson plan book is reserved for school activities and displays only one week at a time. Seldom does a teacher flip forward in her lesson plan book; her upcoming commitments are therefore not constantly being seen to remind her to prepare for them. In addition, the lesson plan book usually stays on the desk; like a faithful old dog, the portable calendar goes wherever the teacher goes.

Day-at-a-Glance

When deciding on a calendar, the first decision is whether you want to buy a one-day-at-a-glance appointment calendar, a week-at-a-glance calendar, or a month-at-a-glance calendar. While day-at-a-glance calendars are useful for lawyers and physicians, who have each hour partialled out for

appointments, they don't work as well for teachers. Teachers find week-at-a-glance or month-at-a-glance calendars more useful.

Week-at-a-Glance

American life revolves around the week as the primary unit of time, so using a week-at-a-glance calendar is appealing. In addition, given that both the weekly and monthly calendars have the same size page, the weekly calendar affords four times more writing space. When Consuela used a weekly calendar, she swore she'd never switch to a monthly one. However, she decided to make herself try a monthly calendar one year, and fell in love with being able to view the entire month at a time. She uses a monthly calendar to this day.

Month-at-a-Glance

The month-at-a-glance calendar has special appeal for teachers because so much of what we do is planned far in advance. For example, Harry scheduled all his guest speakers for the year as soon as school started. When Harry knew he would be teaching a unit on career education in March and April, he would call his resources in September, schedule them to come talk to his kids, and be able to get a feel for the whole month whenever he turned to the appropriate page. Because Harry used his calendar only for appointments (such as parent conferences) or important dates (such as report card time), the smaller space afforded by the monthly calendar, as compared to the weekly, was sufficient.

Day Planners

Day planners, also called day runners or personal planners, differ from calendars in that they include other tools in addition to a calendar. You'll be surprised how much better you'll like a day planner than a stand-alone calendar. The contents of your day planner can vary with your specific needs. You can buy one already assembled or you can buy the empty cover and custom make your own. If you make you own, you'll find that in addition to the calendar, you will want to include a telephone-address book and some blank paper for notes and to-do lists.

A useful way to organize the telephone-address book is to categorize and cluster, rather than alphabetizing, the people you contact. For example, you may want to list all of the people who do presentations for your class in one cluster. Then when you're scheduling your speakers for the year, you

won't forget one. You may want to categorize and cluster the parents who will supervise field trips, those who will send food for parties, and so on. In addition to parents clustered in those groups, Hyon Lee also keeps the addresses and phone numbers of all students in one list. Then when she makes a quarterly call to each child's home, she has all of the names at hand and won't overlook someone.

Teachers who keep a spiral-bound telephone message log in their planners find it an important organizational tool. When the teacher returns a call, if it is necessary to set a follow-up meeting or teleconference date, he has both the message log and the calendar handy.

Student Databases

In addition to their addresses and phone numbers, you'll want a copy of a student database in your day planner. The student database should include parents' work phones, emergency phone numbers, the child's birth date, and any other important data such as medical information. Some teachers include such information as names of brothers and sisters so when they call a parent, they can show interest in the family by inquiring about the other children.

You'll want to create the database on your computer so that you can update it easily and have the computer version handy as well as the hard copy in your planner. Simply use the database program that comes with your basic office program. Figure 1.13 shows an example of a student database.

Summary

In this section, we have discussed calendars, day planners, and databases. We have suggested the tools that you want to include in your day planner.

Check off those elements that you now know how to use. Reread about those that you are not certain that you now know how to use.

- ☐ Calendars
- ☐ Day planners
- ☐ Databases

	<i>Last Name</i>	<i>First Name</i>	<i>Parents</i>	<i>Street Address</i>	<i>Mailing Address</i>	<i>Phone</i>
1	Barber	Billy Jack	Pat & Jo Kincade	123 Alabama	same	555-1234
2	Coe	Ann	Mary O'Riley	234 Pennsylvania	same	555-1237
3	Dart	C.J.	Ed & Wanda	345 Florida	same	555-1238
4	Emerson	Oscar	Bandy & Rose	123 Oklahoma	same	none
5	Estrada	Andrea	Mike & Anita	456 Alaska	PO 678	555-2345
6	Fry	Freddie	William	Rt 4 Box 444	same	555-5678
7	Griffiths	Gay Su	Rocky & May	789 Ohio	same	555-2346
8	Hawthorne	V.J.	Vera Bell	234 Texas	PO 456	555-1235
9	Hudson	Jonnie	Jeff & KC	123 Kansas	same	555-2347
10	Kitchen	Melissa	M.C.	345 Washington	PO 567	555-2348
11	Land	Mac Jr.	Mac	Rt. 3 Box 305	same	555-4567
12	Newton	Galen	Newt & Liz	567 Trenton	PO 234	555-6789
13	Tettleton	Dawn	Mollye Scotland	456 Windthorst	same	555-4789
14	Williams	Phillip	Phyllis LeBlanc	567 Buffet	same	none

Figure 1.13. Student Database

RECOMMENDED READING

Covey, S. R. (1989). *The 7 habits of highly effective people*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

2

BURIED UNDER ADMINISTRATIVE PAPERWORK?

Many teachers who burn out say, "It's not the kids that made me give up on teaching. It's the paperwork! I went to college to be able to teach kids. Not to push papers around." Because the stress of administrative paperwork can be so debilitating, it's imperative that teachers learn good ways to streamline these nonteaching duties. This chapter will help you with that task.

STREAMLINING DAILY TASKS

In the last chapter, we discussed how to organize your time and memory. In this section, we will discuss how to streamline your daily administrative tasks. We will discuss:

- ☐ Delegating authority
- ☐ Student numbers
- ☐ Clipboards
- ☐ Photocopy box

Delegating Authority

Having to take roll is a chore for teachers, but students love to get to take roll. Delegate that authority!

Teachers tend to want to be all things to all people. No one can be all things to all people! We all have limits and have to take care of ourselves. One way that we can take care of ourselves is by delegating responsibilities. Even primary children can learn to help with administrative paperwork. You can put children in charge of roll call, checking in and out class library books, reminding pull-out children to go to their special classes, and a host of other administrative chores. Not only does it lessen the load you carry, but it gives the children opportunities to use the skills learned in school in real-world situations. Children receive a great sense of class ownership when they help with the daily routine tasks of running a class.

Student Numbers

Student numbers are a huge time-saver! Assign each student the number that his name falls on in your gradebook. For example: Abelson, Aaron might be number 1 in your grade book, and Zywicki, Zoe might be number 26. Once you've assigned the student numbers, have each student write his number on his paper in addition to his name. Then, when students turn in their papers, you can quickly place them in numerical order and they are ready to record in your gradebook. By placing them in numerical order, you save time over having to alphabetize them.

Clipboards

First grade teacher Sylvia Broussard told us, "Clipboards stack up in a small space, keep items securely separated, and are highly mobile. On my desk, one clipboard holds my current lesson plans, one holds a roster of students' names on a checklist, and one is for future lesson plans. The checklist roster of students helps keep track of items students are supposed to turn in (picture money, permission slips, homework). The current lesson plan clipboard gives me easy access to my lesson plans throughout the day. I can carry it with me to the reading area and don't have to run back to my desk to check the lesson plan book. The future lesson plan clipboard is right at my fingertips to jot down ideas and reminders, or to clip on information about programs or schedule changes that may affect next week's planning. When I begin to plan the next week's lessons, all my ideas and reminders

are in one place." We recommend a clipboard with a clip that won't dump all your pages when you bump into something.

Photocopy Box

The photocopy box is a tool you'll use every day. When you are planning and come across a page that you want to photocopy for the students, place it in the photocopy box. Then when you get ready to go to the photocopy machine, you have all the papers you need together. If you don't use a photocopy box, you'll spend time looking for all the papers that you'd intended to photocopy that day, because you'll have laid them on your desk and covered them up with other papers.

We find ourselves highlighting the parts of articles we most want to use. If you do that too, be sure you use highlighters that are invisible to photocopy machines. Beware of highlighters that will copy as dark gray smudges.

Summary

In this section, we have discussed ways to deal with daily administrative tasks. Specifically, we've covered the items following. Read over them and make sure that you understand each.

- ☐ Delegating authority
- ☐ Student numbers
- ☐ Clipboards
- ☐ Photocopy box

ACCOMMODATING OCCASIONAL ADMINISTRATIVE TASKS

In the last section, we discussed some ways to streamline administrative tasks that face you every day. In this section, we discuss administrative tasks that arise on a more occasional basis. Specifically, we will cover the following:

- ☐ Teacher's Bulletin Board
- ☐ Color coding classes
- ☐ Form letters
- ☐ To-be-sent-home box
- ☐ Carbonless copy paper

- ☐ Self-duplicating memo forms
- ☐ Documentation

The Teacher's Bulletin Board

We capitalized the term The Teacher's Bulletin Board to discriminate between it and the regular classroom bulletin boards. The Teacher's Bulletin Board is hers alone. It holds reminders, notices, and memos that she needs to consider, and manila envelopes into which she can slip related information. A useful size is 2 x 3 feet. Such bulletin boards can be purchased for under 10 dollars at a discount store.

Color Coding Classes

Pam Alexander teaches in a departmentalized elementary school. Pam tells us that she color codes her different classes. She uses neon paper, and each class has its own color. She uses the neon papers for roll sheets, grade sheets, and so on. That way she doesn't have to go through a whole stack of roll sheets, for example, to find the correct one. She just makes a beeline for the appropriate color in the stack.

Form Letters

Title a computer folder Form Letters. Keep all of your various and assorted form letter masters in the folder. Keep it on your hard drive and on a backup disk. If you don't have form letter masters, make some. Writing an original letter each time you need to communicate with a parent is a terrible waste of time. By using the form letter, you can simply insert the information that applies to the particular situation and save yourself lots of time.

Susan Babbitt, a Tulsa, Oklahoma, school administrator, told us, "Unless there's some reason that it's essential for a form letter to look formal, I like to use clip art to make them seem warmer and more friendly and personal. I also like to use a font with more flair than typical business letters use, and I use 18 point size if feasible. Who could possibly be threatened by a form letter with a fun font and a merry piece of clip art?"

To-Be-Sent-Home Box

Whenever you have things to be sent home with children, such as form letters, place them in a to-be-sent-home box. Keep the box by the door, and

assign a student each week to help you remember to check the box before you dismiss class.

Carbonless Copy Paper

John is a great aficionado of carbonless copy paper. He uses the smaller size to hand-write notes to students when he wants to keep a copy. Of course, he could photocopy the notes, but that would require a trip out of his room, down the hall, up the stairs . . . to the copier. He could also wordprocess the note. He does wordprocess notes when they should be more formal; however, when he specifically wants the note to appear informal and nonthreatening, he prefers to hand-write it, so he uses carbonless copy paper.

With its built-in carbon, the 8.5 x 11 inch size carbonless copy paper is also an excellent way to provide a copy of a good notetaker's notes to a special education student whose Individualized Education Plan requires that he be provided with a copy of class notes. It's also a good way to provide a copy of the notes for a student who has been ill and missed class.

Self-Duplicating Memo Forms

John says that the most handy tool he uses is a book of self-duplicating memo forms. They are made of carbonless copy paper. John prefers the memos that are 5½ x 4 inches and come two memos to a page. As with the carbonless copy paper, he uses these when he doesn't want the memo to be threatening to the recipient, yet he wants to keep a copy of the memo.

They make a great documenting tool for working with the student who is in special education, particularly the student who has emotional or behavior problems. When an incident arises in class that you think the parent needs to know about, write a short memo, send it home to the parent, and keep your copy in the memo book. In the same way, if you want to send the principal a short memo documenting an incident, you'll have a copy of your own memo if you use the book. Having a book for each of the students in your class for whom documenting behaviors is going to be essential is a great organizational idea.

Documentation

That leads us into our discussion of documenting. You may find that for most documentation, you don't need to send a note to anyone. For this type of documentation, save space in the lower righthand corner of your

lesson plan pages each week. Note a day, time, and behavior in that area, and then at the end of each grading period, transfer that information to individual student folders.

You can also transfer that information to your student database on the computer.

Wendy Hazlett is a second grade teacher and reading specialist who has a nifty way to document. Wendy keeps a page of blank address labels on a clipboard. As she walks about her classroom, when she notices something that she wants to document, she writes it on an address label. At the end of the day, Wendy sits down with her student folders and the address labels. She sticks each label onto the inside of the appropriate folder.

Summary

In this section, we have discussed ways to streamline tasks that you need to do only occasionally. Make certain that you understand all of these organizational techniques before proceeding:

- ☐ Teacher's Bulletin Board
- ☐ Color coding classes
- ☐ Form letters
- ☐ To-be-sent-home box
- ☐ Carbonless copy paper
- ☐ Self-duplicating memo forms
- ☐ Documentation

ORGANIZING STUDENT DATA

In the last section, we discussed tasks that you need to do only occasionally. In this section, we will discuss a task that you need to do only at the beginning of the year and when you get new students. We didn't include it in the last section because we think it deserves its own.

- ☐ Student data Smart Books

Student Data Smart Books

We both find our student information data banks invaluable. On the first day of class, we have each student complete a personal data sheet. The sheet

Mr. Woo's Class		Photo
Student Personal Data		
Name_____	SSN_____	
Preferred Name_____	DOB_____	
Custodial Parent(s)_____		
Street Address_____		
Mailing Address_____		
Phone_____	Emergency_____	
Interests_____		
Special Classes_____		
Mentor_____		
Other_____		

Figure 2.1. Mr. Woo's Class

includes phone number, address, birthday, all the usual stuff. We also include a previous GPA so we will be able to start the year with heterogeneous groupings. Then we take a photo of each student. We enter all the written data into a database, and then scan in the students' pictures. This allows us either to keep the database paperless, or else to print out a paper copy of each individual student's information, a list of all the students' information, or both, and place it/them in a three-ring binder (Figures 2.1 and 2.2).

An advantage of having a paper copy of each student's datasheet in a three-ring binder is that you can carry it with you and have instant access to the information whenever you might need it. You can also log such

	<i>Last Name</i>	<i>First Name</i>	<i>Parents</i>	<i>Street Address</i>	<i>Mailing Address</i>	<i>Phone</i>
1	Barber	Billy Jack	Pat & Jo Kincade	123 Alabama	same	555-1234
2	Coe	Ann	Mary O'Riley	234 Pennsylvania	same	555-1237
3	Dart	C.J.	Ed & Wanda	345 Florida	same	555-1238
4	Emerson	Oscar	Bandy & Rose	123 Oklahoma	same	none
5	Estrada	Andrea	Mike & Anita	456 Alaska	PO 678	555-2345
6	Fry	Freddie	William	Rt 4 Box 444	same	555-5678
7	Griffiths	Gay Su	Rocky & May	789 Ohio	same	555-2346
8	Hawthorne	V.J.	Vera Bell	234 Texas	PO 456	555-1235
9	Hudson	Jonnie	Jeff & KC	123 Kansas	same	555-2347
10	Kitchen	Melissa	M.C.	345 Washington	PO 567	555-2348
11	Land	Mac Jr.	Mac	Rt. 3 Box 305	same	555-4567
12	Newton	Galen	Newt & Liz	567 Trenton	PO 234	555-6789
13	Tettleton	Dawn	Mollye Scotland	456 Windthorst	same	555-4789
14	Williams	Phillip	Phyllis LeBlanc	567 Buffet	same	none

Figure 2.2. Student Database

information as when a student has been referred to the principal for discipline, when telephone calls have been made home, and more. For each student who has an IEP, you can keep a copy of the objectives and modifications in the folder.

One of the teachers we surveyed told us that he calls his student data notebook his Smart Book from a term used in the military that tells a newcomer everything he needs to know about his new assignment. We like the name!

Summary

In this section, we have discussed how to organize your student data.

☐ Student data Smart Book

SETTING UP THE CLASSROOM LIBRARY

In the last section, we discussed how to organize your student data. In this section, we will share some ideas on how to organize your classroom library.

- ☐ Classroom library card system
- ☐ Color coding classroom library books
- ☐ Use inventory of classroom library books

Classroom Library Card System

You probably already use library cards and library card envelopes to keep track of your class library books, but here's a wonderful addition to that idea.

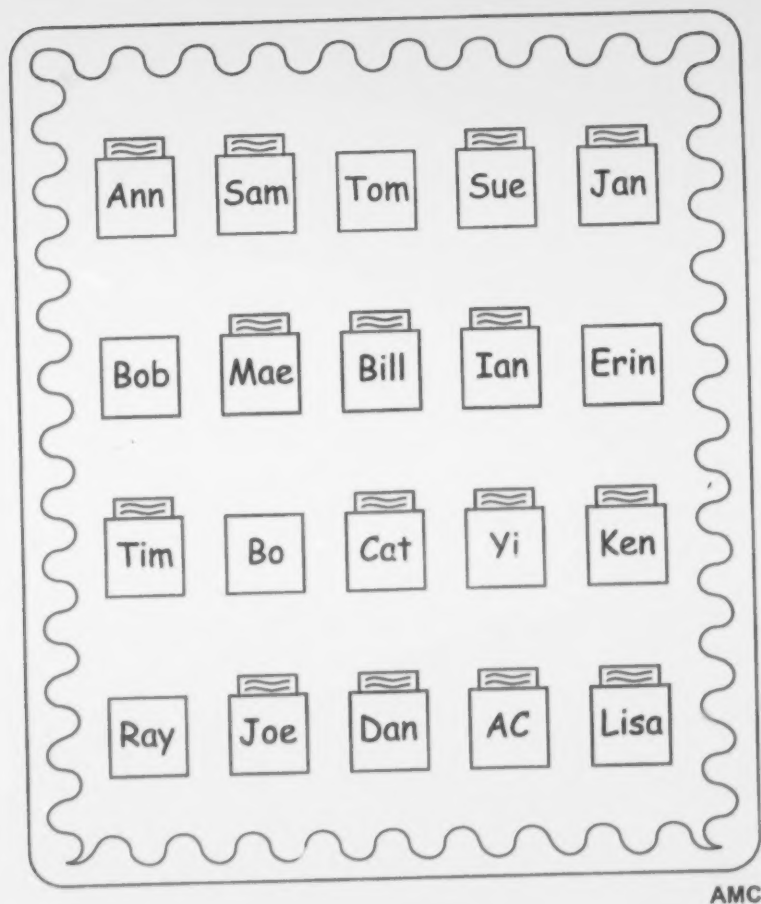
On a bulletin board or a poster, place a library card envelope for each child. When a child checks out a book, have her slip the library card into her envelope. That way you can see at a glance who is reading what (Figure 2.3). You'll be able to note if someone seldom checks out a book, and you'll be prompted to encourage him to check one out.

Color Coding Classroom Library Books

While you probably already organize your nonfiction classroom library books by topic, try color coding your fiction titles by topic using colored dots on the spines of books. For example, put a blue dot on the spine of all books that are animal stories, a purple dot on all the sports stories, and so on. A student who is interested only in animal fiction could tell at a glance which books she'd like to read most. Some of the books may need two or three different dots. For example, an animal sports story would have both a blue and a purple dot.

Use Inventory of Classroom Library Books

A use inventory of classroom library books is entirely different from an inventory that identifies what books are missing. In the use inventory, you chart how many times each book is checked out in a semester. You can then use that data to make decisions about categories of books and individual titles. For example, if you find that nonfiction books on space are checked out the most frequently of any category, then you know to buy more



AMC

Figure 2.3. Classroom Library Card System

nonfiction books on space. If you find that *Island of the Blue Dolphins* is checked out more often than your other fiction titles, then you know to buy duplicate copies of that particular book.

In contrast, if you found that books on gardening are never checked out, you would know: (a) not to buy more gardening books, and/or (b) to launch a campaign to encourage the kids to learn about gardening.

Kids love to do the use inventory for you, so delegate that authority!

Summary

In this section, we have discussed some ways to streamline your classroom library. Specifically, we discussed:

- ☐ Classroom library card system
- ☐ Color coding classroom library books
- ☐ Use inventory of classroom library books

CREATING THE PAPERLESS CLASSROOM

In the last section, we discussed how to streamline your classroom library. In this section, we will discuss the paperless classroom. Specifically, we will address:

- ☐ The paperless classroom
- ☐ Computerized gradebooks
- ☐ Using computers to make students' work available to parents

The Paperless Classroom

We are excited about the potential that the paperless classroom has. By moving most of your administrative work to computer, you will cut down on an amazing amount of clutter. Attendance, for example, can be kept on computer and sent by e-mail to the office. Lunch count can be handled the same way. Notes to the principal, counselor, or other staff can, and probably should be, sent e-mail. If you want to save a copy of the note and document that you sent it, you can send yourself a copy or a blind copy when you mail it to the other person.

Inventory is such a pain, but computer databases make taking inventory more tolerable. Being able to search for a book number by computer is far preferable to the old way when the list is alphabetical by name of child. Likewise, searching for the name of a child on a book inventory is far preferable to the old way of organizing by book number.

The classroom library checkout system should also be computerized, and students can handle the "administrivia" involved with the class library. By using a database program, it is not only easy to know who has read what, but you can quickly identify the titles that justify a second copy or that should be discarded.

Computerizing your classroom library, however, does not mean that the classroom library bulletin board we discussed earlier isn't a valuable tool. It is! However, by also having the records on the computer, you will be able to analyze data in a way that the bulletin board alone would not allow.

Computerized Gradebooks

Computerized gradebooks are nothing more than spreadsheets. Anyone who has had a basic computing course can develop a computer gradebook; however, they can be purchased for a very reasonable price. Some of the features of computerized gradebooks are: (a) individual printouts of a student's grades and the subject of the assignment for which she received that grade; (b) which assignments have not been turned in; (c) a grade average to date for each student; (d) a class grade average on each assignment; and (e) a dozen other things you never knew you needed until you found out about them. Some commercial computer gradebooks have ready-made letters to parents that allow you to insert the grade information you want to share.

Think of the benefit of being able to print out a copy of a child's grades for his parents on the spot! You could show parents how the student has improved this 6 weeks over the past 6 weeks. You could show which assignments he had missed. On low grades, you could show the parents the class's grade average as compared to their child's grade on an assignment. . . . The list goes on and on.

Using Computers to Make Students' Work Available to Parents

As schools become more sophisticated in their use of computers, more possibilities for communicating with parents will be possible for teachers. One way is scanning student papers into your classroom's web page file and inviting parents to review them via their home computers. Many programs for doing this will likely be on the market soon. Currently we know of one that could be used for this purpose, SERF®, from the University of Delaware.

Summary

In this section, we have discussed the potential of and some specifics of the paperless classroom. Reread any item you are unsure about.

- ☐ The paperless classroom
- ☐ Computerized gradebooks
- ☐ Using computers to make students' work available to parents

3

MANAGING INSTRUCTIONAL PRINT MATERIAL

As teachers, we can find ourselves drowning in a veritable pool of paper! We have piles of paper resources that help us with our planning. We have baskets of kids' papers to examine, grade, and edit. Learning how to organize the papers that make up our teacher-lives is a crucial task. After all, the terrific diagram you have on the circulation system does you absolutely no good if you don't know where you stashed it. In addition, if you don't have good ways to handle kids' papers, you come across as disorganized and inefficient. This chapter will help you with those tasks.

STREAMLINING PRINT RESOURCES AND PLANNING

In the last chapter, we identified ways to organize administrative print material. In this section, we will show you how to organize resources and planning print materials:

- ☐ Three-ring notebooks
- ☐ Index dividers

- ☐ Plastic page protector sleeves
- ☐ Computer storage disk sleeves
- ☐ Color coding
- ☐ Workshop folders
- ☐ Unit library materials list
- ☐ Folders within folders
- ☐ Organizing the lesson plan book
- ☐ Hanging files for daily planning

Three-Ring Notebooks

Many organized teachers like using three-ring notebooks to organize teaching material. There are several advantages of three-ring notebooks over file folders. First, all of your material on a given topic can be kept together instead of in several folders. Second, the three-ring notebook is convenient to carry with you when you go home, to the teachers' lounge, or to a grade level meeting. Third, if you drop it, you don't scatter your papers all over the parking lot and lose them.

Keep your three-ring notebooks on your bookshelves. Write the title of each notebook on its spine in large letters so it's easily identifiable.

Index Dividers

Index dividers are those tagboard sheets with tabs that section off your three-ring notebook. Good index dividers cost quite a bit more than the cheap ones, but they're worth the extra investment. The cheap ones have clear plastic tabs. You write the title of the section on the small pieces of paper that come with the dividers and slip them into the clear plastic tabs. The more expensive index dividers are either numbered or lettered. They come with a blank table of contents page. Being able to write the title of the section on the cheap dividers is nice, but the more expensive numbered or lettered dividers last longer and look more professional.

Plastic Page Protector Sleeves

When you have materials that are fragile (such as pages from magazines), place them in plastic page protector sleeves and pop them into the notebook. A page protector sleeve is simply an envelope of clear plastic with holes punched in one side to allow it to be inserted into a three-ring notebook. We've tried the cheap page protectors and have found that we much prefer the more expensive ones. They're much more durable than their

cheaper cousins. "Never buy cheap canned tomatoes, cheap paint, or cheap page protectors!" said Virginia Klapperich, a retired art and special education teacher.

Computer Disk Storage Sleeves

Computer disk storage sleeves that fit into a three-ring notebook are a good investment. Keep the disks for each subject in your notebook for that particular subject; however, you may prefer to have a three-ring binder strictly for your disks.

Color Coding

One way to organize your three-ring notebooks, your file folders, or other paperwork systems is through the use of color coding. For example, Margaret uses different color notebooks for different subjects; red denotes math units, blue denotes language arts units, and so on. Within large notebooks, say for example, her notebook on teaching social studies, she color codes different sections by using colored dividers and by attaching colored sticker dots to various handouts. Yellow dots denote material to teach geography, blue denote citizenship, green denote economics, and so on.

Unit Library Materials List

When you create a thematic unit, have the librarian make you a list of all library materials that are related to your unit. Keep the list in your unit folder or unit three-ring notebook. As you review each of the materials, highlight the ones that you've decided to use. That way, you don't have to ask her every year what materials are available on your topic. You'll not only have a list of all the materials you used, you'll also have a list of all available materials on your topic in case your needs change.

Be sure to ask your librarian to let you know when new materials related to your topics are purchased by the library.

Folders Within Folders

Folders within folders are an excellent way to organize lesson material on your computer. For example, within a computer folder on literature, you might have one folder on books set in the antebellum South, another set in the Progressive Era, another set in the Great Depression, and so forth. There

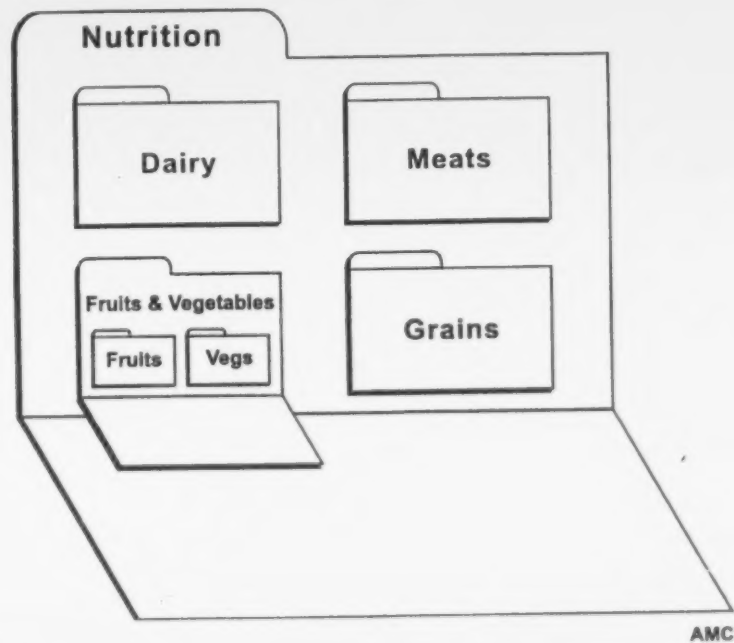


Figure 3.1. Folders Within Folders

is no limit to the number of folders that you can put inside of virtual folders (Figure 3.1).

Organizing the Lesson Plan Book

J.D., a curriculum director, gave us this idea. Before school starts, sit down with your district calendar and your lesson plan book. Record the dates of each week. Then record all the important dates: every holiday, the dates that report cards are due, the dates of special school programs, and so on.

If your district has identified specific time frames for major units (as J.D.'s did), schedule your units at this time. For example, if you're supposed to teach state history for 12 weeks and then move on to American history, record the dates for beginning and ending each unit. Also schedule any special speakers and record the dates that they'll be coming. You may also want to note to call them several days ahead of time in order to make certain that they haven't forgotten you!

When she taught first grade, Millie used to change thematic units on the first of each month. At the beginning of the school year, she gave her

librarian the monthly topics so she could reserve all related materials. J.D.'s idea would help you in planning for thematic units.

Hanging Files for Planning

Several teachers told us that they use a hanging file to help organize their planning. They advised us to tell you to have a folder in the hanging file for each day. Place all that day's papers and plans in the file instead of in stacks all over your desk.

Summary

In this section, we have discussed ways to streamline your print resources for teaching and for planning. Check the following list to determine which ideas you know how to use and those about which you are unsure. Go back and reread any that you are unsure about before you proceed further.

- ☐ Three-ring notebooks
- ☐ Index dividers
- ☐ Plastic page protector sleeves
- ☐ Computer storage disk sleeves
- ☐ Color coding
- ☐ Unit library materials list
- ☐ Folders within folders
- ☐ Organizing the lesson plan book
- ☐ Hanging files for daily planning

ORGANIZING STUDENT WORK PRINT

In the last section, we discussed ways of streamlining your resource and planning print. In this section, we'll take a look at ways that you can deal with student classwork and homework more efficiently. Specifically, we will cover:

- ☐ Individual student folders
- ☐ Locker magnets for homework
- ☐ Homework mailboxes
- ☐ Hanging files for returning homework
- ☐ Makeup work for absent students

- ☐ Color coding edited writing

Individual Student Folders

Michelle Cassetty, an elementary teacher, and Traci Cook, a seventh grade reading teacher, each use individual student folders. Michelle files her pre-assessments in the folder, as well as any notes she receives from parents.

On the front of her folders, Traci writes the student's name, class period, and seating assignment (as in Row 3, Seat 2). The folders are color coded by class period. They are stored in a milk crate by the door. The first person who comes to class each period picks up the class's folders and passes them out. It doesn't matter whether or not the student knows the names of all the students in the class; the seating assignment takes care of showing him what folder goes to what seat.

Traci explains that she doesn't allow students to have anything on their desktops except the folders. Inside the folder, the student has a journal record, reading record, extra paper, discipline card, and any uncompleted work. At the end of class, students pass their folders to the front and one student places them back in the milk crate.

Locker Magnets for Homework

Here's a neat idea. Michelle Cassetty uses her hot glue gun to glue a small magnet on the back of a clothespin. Each student places a magnet clothespin on her locker. Then when she comes in each morning, she clips her homework to the clothespin. Michelle can tell at a glance who has completed their homework.

Homework Mailboxes

Homework mailboxes can either be cereal boxes or stacking desk trays. If you opt for cereal boxes, staple them together five wide by as tall as necessary. If you use stacking trays (and they are a good investment), line them up five abreast and as tall as necessary (Figure 3.2). Each child has her own homework mailbox. As each student enters the classroom in the morning, she will place her homework in her mailbox. By looking at the mailboxes, you can tell in an instant which kids haven't turned in their homework.

Use student numbers to assign mailboxes. Then when a student collects the homework for you, the papers are in order for your gradebook.

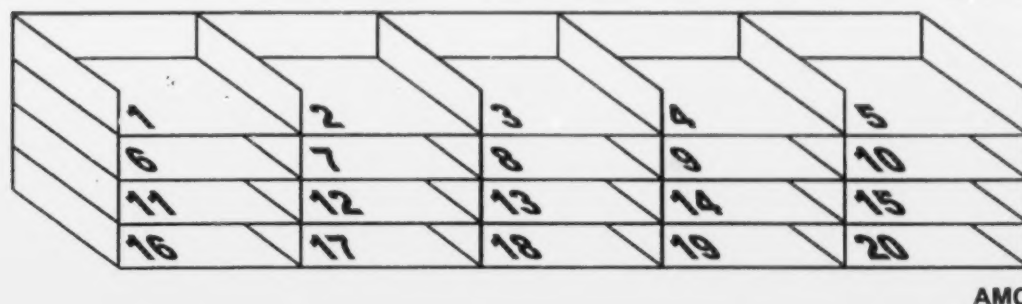


Figure 3.2. Homework Mailboxes

When your student collects the homework from homework mailboxes, have her ask students whose homework is missing where their assignments are.

Kimberly Smith uses her student mailboxes (she uses stacking file trays) to send home notes as well as to pass papers back to students.

We think that stacking trays are a good investment not only because they are sturdy, but because they look very professional.

Hanging Files for Returning Homework

A hanging file for each student, with the student's name on it, is an efficient way to take care of returning homework. Instead of taking class time to return dozens of homework papers, slip each student's homework into his hanging file. You can either let students come up before and after class, or you can return several assignments together, rather than one assignment at a time. If you held the papers until there were 10 in a student's stack, you would hand back papers only one tenth of the time that you do when you hand back each paper! Of course the problem with that is the delay in time for corrective feedback. You would want to pull any papers that showed the student needed reteaching and act on that immediately. All students could be told that if they don't receive their homework back immediately, they can rest assured that they are doing satisfactory work.

Makeup Work for Absent Students

Dealing with makeup work is such a hassle! Here are several ideas to help you manage makeup assignments.

Homework Calendar

Lara Matthews, a secondary teacher, shared her homework calendar idea with us. Lara has a laminated homework calendar that she keeps displayed on the wall. Below the calendar is a box with a folder for each day of the month. Lara writes each day's work on the calendar. If there are worksheets or papers, they are placed in the folder for that day of the month. Lara said, "For example, if Johnny is absent on the third of October, he can look on the calendar for the third and write down his assignments. Then he can look in the folder with the 3 on it and find the worksheets he needs."

When you are passing out worksheets, have a student assigned to the job of placing the extras in the folder for that day.

Individual Absentee Folders

First grade teacher Lisa Palmer uses a red laminated file folder for each absent student. She places the folder on the student's desk and has a seatmate place each worksheet in the folder. Lisa has written, "Absent today! We missed you!" on the folder, so if a sibling or parent comes to pick up the work, the child knows that his teacher is thinking of him.

Lisa explains that if the work missed is to be made up at school instead of at home, the student keeps his red folder on his desk until all of the work has been completed. That way, Linda knows at a glance who should be working on makeup work during free time.

Color Coding Edited Writing

When you are editing a student's writing, using colored felt tip pens allows you to color code your remarks. For example, purple notes things you thought were great. Grammar and spelling errors can be noted in red. Green edits note a problem in organization. Blue notes mean you are sharing a thought that came into your head as you were reading. Brown comments indicate that you question whether a fact is correct.

Summary

In this section, we've discussed ways to organize paper teaching materials. Check off the methods that you know how to use and reread those about which you are uncertain.

- ☐ Individual student folders
- ☐ Locker magnets for homework

- ☐ Homework mailboxes
- ☐ Hanging files for returning homework
- ☐ Makeup work for absent students
- ☐ Color coding edited writing

TRANSPORTING MATERIALS

In the last section, we discussed ways of streamlining student classwork and homework. In this section, we will give you a couple of ways to deal with printed materials when you are mobile. Specifically, we will present three ideas:

- ☐ Workshop folders
- ☐ Small rolling suitcases with handles
- ☐ Audiovisual carts

Workshop Folders

We all find ourselves with piles of papers when we come home from workshops or conventions. Here are two good ways to deal with those papers when you first get them, and later when you have time to go through them.

Go to the workshop with a folder. Before you go, label the folder on the outside. Then draw lines down the inside of the folder so you have three columns on the inside of the front cover and three columns on the inside of the back cover. Take your notes at the workshop in these columns rather than on edges of handouts, old napkins in your purse, or any of the other inappropriate places we make notes at workshops and conventions.

Then place any handouts you get inside the folder.

As soon as you get home, go through the folder and discard any handouts that aren't useful to you. Either keep those that you find useful in the folder or, better yet, pull them out and place them in the appropriate three-ring binder. If the workshop is on something for which you don't have a three-ring binder (say, special education modifications), then start a new three-ring binder for those and related handouts.

Small Rolling Suitcases With Handles

For the materials that you have to take home, small rolling suitcases with handles are wonderful (see Figure 3.3). Ann Estrada introduced us to them.



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Figure 3.3. Small Rolling Suitcase With Handles

Once you try one of these great inventions, you'll abandon your briefcase in favor of it. It'll save your back and allow you to take home much more material than you'd otherwise be able to carry. You can attach your laptop to it by using the strap at the top of the suitcase, or carry it inside of the suitcase for more protection. We got ours for 30 dollars.

Audiovisual Carts

If you are one of those teachers who must move from room to room, such as an Inclusion Teacher, an audiovisual (AV) cart may provide the answer you need. Because AV carts are usually two-tiered, you can place a hanging file on the top tier and your other materials on the bottom tier. Then, instead of trying to carry your materials from room to room, you can wheel them down the hall.

If you don't know where a spare AV cart in your building can be found, check with your custodian. She will almost certainly know where one is stored.

Summary

In this section, we have discussed how to deal with paperwork when you must be mobile. Check the following list to be certain that you understand each idea:

- ☐ Workshop folders
- ☐ Small rolling suitcases with handles
- ☐ Audiovisual carts

ORGANIZING FOR SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS

In the last section, we discussed organizational ways of increasing your mobility from room to room, room to home, and room to workshop. When you are going to be gone to a workshop with that workshop folder and/or roll-aboard, you'll need to plan for your substitute teacher. Here are a couple of organizational ideas to help you:

- ☐ Substitute teacher folders
- ☐ Photo seating chart

Substitute Teacher Folders

Kimberly Smith tells us that she keeps a substitute teacher folder ready at all times. Kim's sub folder includes student IDs, student name tags, classroom procedures, where to go for help, class schedule, names of students who may need special help, and names of students who can be counted on for help.

Kim then inserts her daily lesson plans in the sub folder, and she's ready to take off for that professional workshop feeling confident that things will run smoothly while she's gone.

Photo Seating Chart

Sometimes kids find it fun to switch seats with each other when a sub is in charge. One way to help a substitute teacher keep on top of that problem

is a photo seating chart. If you scanned in students' pictures when you created your student data Smart Book, you can take those pictures and copy them onto a page reflecting your seating chart. That way, the kids can't tell the teacher that Henry is Barry and Tammy is Zoe.

Summary

In this section, we have discussed two ways to help you organize for your substitute teacher. Check off those ideas that you know how to use:

- ☐ Substitute teacher folders
- ☐ Photo seating chart

4

CORRALLING NONPRINT MATERIALS

A teacher (who wishes to remain anonymous!) told us recently that she had a colleague who had so many nonprint teaching materials in her room that her principal got fed up with her. He told her on several occasions that her room looked unprofessional, but she was unable to get her nonprint materials organized. Finally, he marched into her room after school with boxes, and he began to crate up her materials himself!

Teachers need oodles and oodles of nonprint materials. The problem is finding ways to organize them so that the classroom looks professional. The ideas in this chapter will help you do that.

CONTAINERS

In the previous chapter, we discussed how to organize print teaching materials. In this chapter, we will discuss how to organize nonprint materials. In this section, we will address only two important ideas:

- ☐ First-class containers
- ☐ Marking containers

First-Class Containers

The first thing we will say about containers is that you need to invest in first-class containers. You're going to be teaching for a lot of years. Don't skimp on your materials. It costs only a little more money to buy good containers than to purchase flimsy ones. Millie was reminded of this several days ago when a colleague picked up a flimsy milk-crate type container out of her car trunk, the container's handle broke, and the contents scattered in the breeze all over the parking lot.

Not only are first-class containers sturdier than cheap ones, but they look professional. A cereal box is not only a flimsy container, but it looks unprofessional. Teachers can't afford to look unprofessional to students, parents, or administrators.

Note that a container can be first class without being used for its original purpose. What we mean by this is that you can recycle sturdy containers, such as two-pound processed cheese boxes and metal adhesive bandage boxes, which we'll discuss later. But if you do use such containers, cover them so that they don't look like two-pound processed cheese boxes and metal adhesive bandage boxes.

Marking Your Containers

Mark all containers on all sides so that you can identify them regardless of how they are stored. For large, hard-to-get-to containers, you'll want to write large with a felt marker. For smaller and easier-to-get-to containers, type or write on adhesive backed labels.

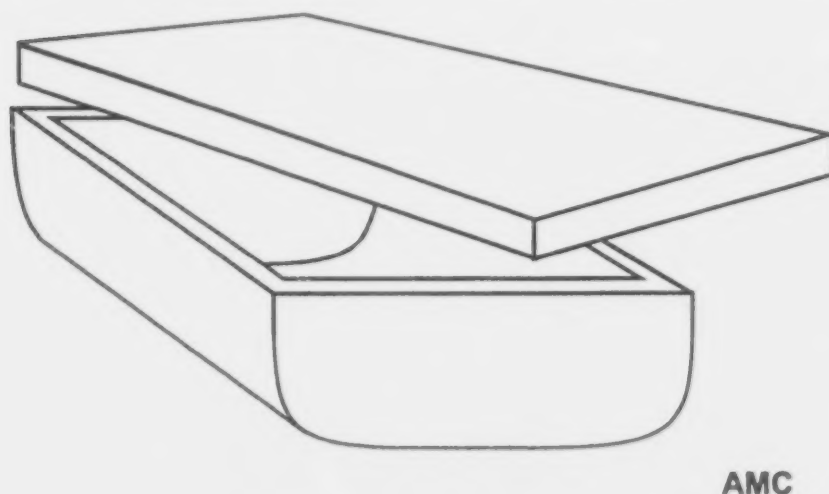
Summary

In this section, we have discussed containers. Specifically, we have discussed the following:

- ☐ First-class containers
- ☐ Marking containers

CONTAINERS FOR SMALL ITEMS

In the last section, we discussed some general ideas about containers. In this section, we will specifically discuss containers for small things.



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Figure 4.1. Plastic Shoe Boxes

- ☐ Plastic storage boxes and drawers
- ☐ Clear plastic organizer boxes
- ☐ Two-pound processed cheese boxes
- ☐ Metal adhesive bandage boxes

Plastic Storage Boxes and Drawers

Buy a variety of high-quality plastic storage boxes and storage drawers. Some of the brands we like are Tupperware,[®] Rubbermaid,[®] Callaway,[®] and Trend Basics.[®] Rubbermaid and Trend Basics are available at your local discount store. Callaway products are available through Callaway House, Inc. (1-800-233-0290 or www.callawayhouse.com). The individual clear plastic boxes resemble shoe boxes; the plastic storage drawers are transparent and come four to six encased in a plastic shell. Some of them have opaque shells; others have transparent shells. Rubbermaid even makes a column of storage boxes with transparent sides and mounted on wheels. What a great tool, especially for a teacher who moves from classroom to classroom, such as an Inclusion Teacher or an art teacher (Figures 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3).

The shoe boxes are heavier and sturdier than the drawers, which can be an advantage. Another advantage of the shoe boxes is that they can be carried around with the lids on; if you want to go down to the lounge to work on

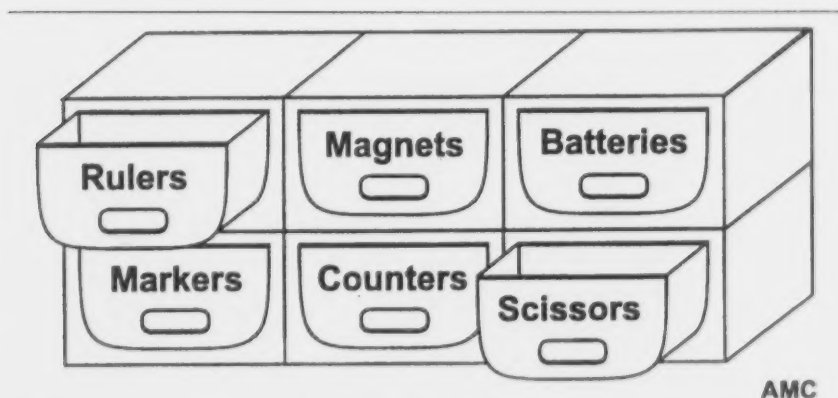


Figure 4.2. Plastic Storage Boxes

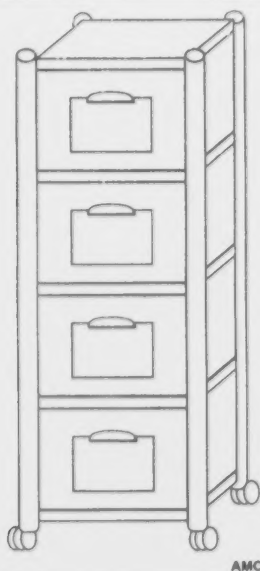


Figure 4.3. Rubbermaid's® Column Storage Drawers With Rollers

something, you can carry a shoe box with you. Joan, a fifth grade teacher, keeps her blank 3×5 index cards in a shoe box; when she wants to take them home to create flash cards or game cards, she doesn't worry about them flying away in the wind. She also uses the shoe boxes for materials that she needs only a few days a year. These she stores in the back of a shelf or cabinet until she needs them.

The plastic storage drawers are ideal for items that are used on a regular basis. Charlie, who teaches first grade, uses them to store supplies that he

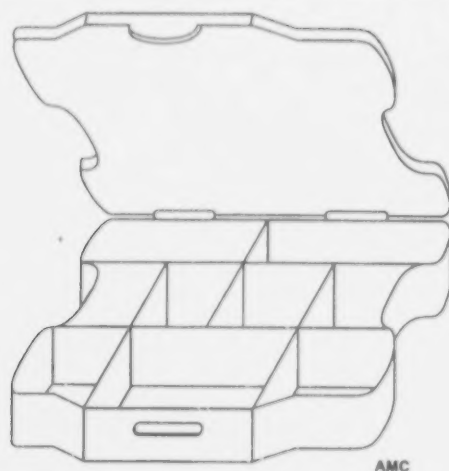


Figure 4.4. Rubbermaid's® Organizer

uses frequently in modeling science lessons. For example, he uses metal washers in a number of experiments, so he stores them in the plastic storage drawers where he has convenient access to them. Joan and Charlie both store their classroom sets of scissors, glue sticks, rulers, plastic counters, and so on, in the storage drawers.

Clear Plastic Organizer Boxes

For your little treasures, such as paper clips, staples, gold stars, and so on, a clear plastic organizer box is a treasure box. Organizer boxes have lots and lots of small compartments of varying sizes. They are an organizer's dream come true! A second grade teacher told us that she requires each of her students to have one of them in their desks. She is committed to helping her students learn to organize themselves.

Two-Pound Processed Cheese Boxes

Two-pound processed cheese boxes are the perfect size and shape to fit on your chalk tray. Our friend Sylvia Broussard covers hers with contact paper and glues a magnetic strip on the side for extra stability. She stores her magnetic backed counters and flash cards that she uses on the dry erase board in the boxes.

Sylvia also makes her regular flash cards the right size to store in the box in her desk. Make divider cards a different color and a little taller than the flash cards to keep them organized.

Metal Adhesive Bandage Boxes

Sylvia also uses metal adhesive bandage boxes on her chalk tray. She removes the lid and stores her dry erase markers inside.

Summary

In this section, we have discussed containers for small items. Specifically, we have presented information on the following:

- ☐ Plastic storage boxes and drawers
- ☐ Clear plastic organizer boxes
- ☐ Two-pound processed cheese boxes
- ☐ Metal adhesive bandage boxes

STORING SMALL BUT RELATIVELY FLAT ITEMS

In the last section, we discussed how to store small things that are of various shapes. In this section, we will discuss how to store small, relatively flat items, such as books. Specifically, we will discuss:

- ☐ Math unit material envelopes
- ☐ Plastic gallon zipper freezer bags
- ☐ Plastic sandwich zipper bags
- ☐ Magnetic clips
- ☐ Copier paper box tops

Math Unit Material Envelopes

Several teachers gave us this idea: When you have small math unit materials such as flash cards or card-like game pieces, keep them together in large manila envelopes. You can even store small books related to the unit in the envelopes.

Label the unit at the top and bottom. Then tape a list of the contents on the front of the envelope before you file it.

Plastic Gallon Zipper Freezer Bags

Instead of the manila envelopes, you may wish to store items in gallon zipper freezer bags. Punch holes in the bottoms of the bags so they will fit in a 4-inch deep three-ring notebook. Keep them in the notebook where you can find them easily. Because the bags are transparent, you can quickly find the cards you are seeking.

Our friend Sylvia requires her first graders to keep a magazine and a book in their desks at all times. These are kept in gallon zipper freezer bags to keep them in good condition.

Sylvia also recommends having children carry gallon zipper bags to collect specimens on nature walks.

Plastic Sandwich Zipper Bags

Plastic sandwich zipper bags are perfect for storing individual students' flash cards or crayons. They don't get spilled inside the child's desk, on the floor, or elsewhere. Primary teachers tell us that sandwich bags are a treasure. The bags, do, however, wear out, so you will have to replace them occasionally.

We also use them to store sets of things. For example, we have game boards for review games. We have enough of them for each group of four to have one. We keep the dice, markers, and game cards that go with each game together in a sandwich bag.

In addition, we keep our sets of flash cards in sandwich bags, and color code the bags with colored dots. The cards for geography are color coded red, those for generic higher-order thinking skills blue, and so on.

Magnetic Clips

Magnetic clips are used to hold student work for exhibit on magnetic boards, as well as for storing schedules and important announcements on the side of your file cabinet.

Copier Paper Box Tops

Photocopier paper box tops provide a good way to organize materials for interest centers. For example, our friend Sylvia keeps a list of spelling words and a plastic bag of rubber letters in one box top so that a student can take this mobile interest center to her desk to work on it.

Summary

In this section, we have discussed ways of storing small, relatively flat items. Specifically, we have presented information on the following:

- ☐ Math unit material envelopes
- ☐ Plastic gallon zipper freezer bags
- ☐ Plastic sandwich zipper bags
- ☐ Magnetic clips
- ☐ Copier paper box tops

STORING BULLETIN BOARD MATERIALS

In the last section, we presented ways to store small, relatively flat things. In this section, we will talk about ways to organize your bulletin board materials. We will present information on streamlining your storage by using:

- ☐ Monthly bulletin board boxes
- ☐ Poster rolls
- ☐ Large trash cans
- ☐ Moving mirror and painting boxes

Monthly Bulletin Board Boxes

We asked teachers to give us their best organizational ideas, and one of our favorites was for monthly bulletin board boxes. Monthly bulletin board boxes should be the same size and shape for neat and attractive storage. You can use cardboard boxes and have each one decorated to represent its month, or you can buy plastic storage tubs with lids and simply write the month on the front of the tub. The teacher who told us about them uses cardboard boxes that she has decorated.

At the beginning of each month, she brings down the box during class. The children are always excited and eager to see what is in the box, and she allows them to decorate the bulletin boards using the materials she has provided. We especially like this idea, because getting to decorate an area helps give students ownership of the area, and ownership is a key to motivation.

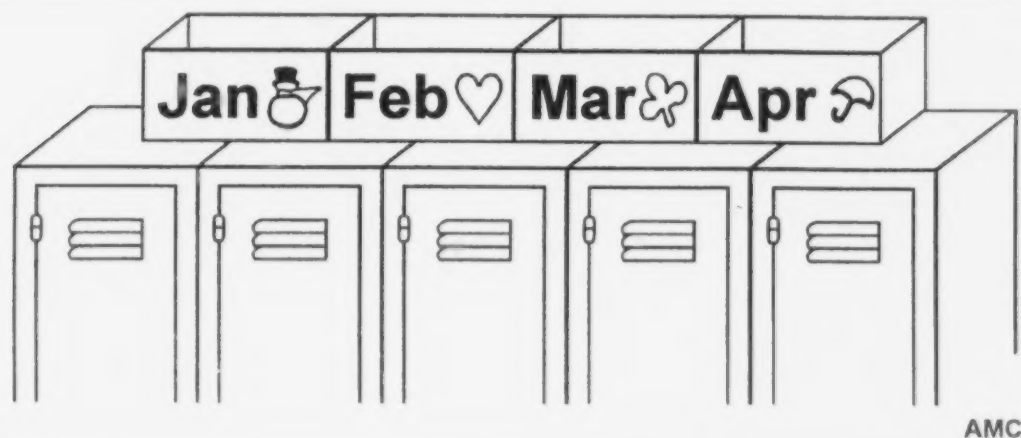


Figure 4.5. Monthly Bulletin Board Boxes

The teacher who gave us the idea lined her boxes up along the top of the lockers in her classroom (Figure 4.5). What a great way to use space that's usually wasted!

Poster Rolls

Maps and posters made of paper can be a pain to store. We have tried laying them flat in the bottom of a large open shelf; but when we put other things in the shelf, we wrinkled or tore the posters. We have tried rolling them up with a rubber band around them and storing them upright in a closet, but they got ruined. We even tried rolling them up and placing them inside of a mailing tube, but we inadvertently tore them when we tried to get them out. We found that the perfect solution is to roll them around a fat mailing tube and secure them with a rubber band. In this way they can be placed almost anywhere. Be sure to color code a corner on the outside of the rolled up poster so you will know to which subject it relates. Below the colored dot, write the name or a brief description of the poster in very small letters so that you will know exactly which poster you want when you look through them.

In your monthly bulletin board boxes, bulletin board border trim can be stored by wrapping it around a mailing tube, a paper towel roll, or a toilet paper roll.

Large Trash Cans

One of the best ideas we know of for storing posters came to us by way of an architect. Architects store blueprints in large trash cans with lids. After you roll your posters around poster rollers, place them in large trash cans and secure the lids.

Word of warning! Label the trash can and show it to your custodian! Explain to him that it is not a trash receptacle, but a poster storage container. Otherwise, he may dutifully throw away five hundred dollars worth of your favorite posters!

Moving Mirror or Painting Boxes

Large, flat materials such as cardboard posters or game boards that you have made out of poster board can be slid into the mirror or painting boxes that can be bought from moving companies. If you decide to use the mirror boxes, you will want to color code them, also. The only problem about the mirror or painting boxes is that they may cost a little more than you want to pay for a cardboard box. If you remember, however, that you will be able to use them for years, the investment is negligible. Of course, you can always watch the classified ads for someone who is selling their moving boxes or ask someone at your local art store to save some for you.

Summary

In this section, we discussed how to organize bulletin board material. Specifically, we discussed the following strategies:

- ☐ Monthly bulletin board boxes
- ☐ Poster rolls
- ☐ Large trash cans
- ☐ Moving mirror and painting boxes

ORGANIZING TOOLS

In the last section, we discussed how to store bulletin board materials to which you need access only once each year. In contrast, in this section, we will discuss how to store tools that you need frequently.

- ☐ Pegboards

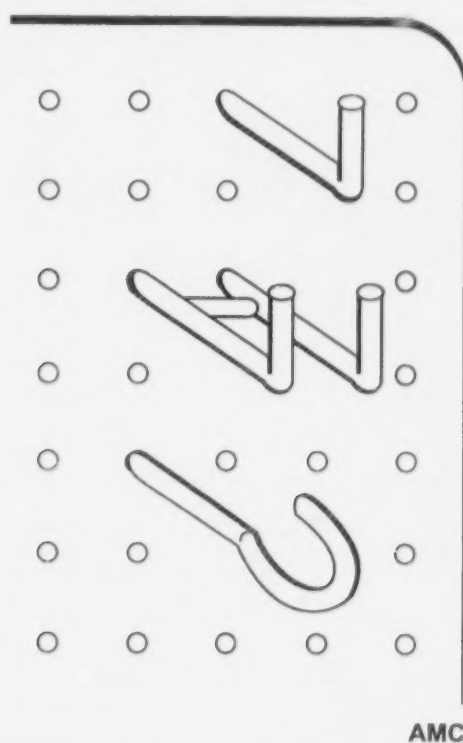


Figure 4.6. Pegboard Hooks

Pegboards

While we keep small tools that are great in number (such as class sets of children's scissors) in plastic storage boxes or drawers, we use pegboards to organize large tools that are few in number (such as the teacher's large scissors). We fell in love with pegboards years ago. They end digging through a deep box or drawer to find things. The variety of peg hooks available at hardware stores will accommodate almost any type of tool that you need to hang: a yardstick, a T-square, a desk stapler, a tape dispenser, and so on. For example, a simple hook will store a yardstick with a hole at one end. If the yardstick doesn't have a hole in one end from which to hang it on a hook, then two hooks placed horizontally 2 feet apart make a bed in which the yardstick can lie. To store a desk stapler, place two long, flat hooks 6 inches apart. The base of the desk stapler makes its own shelf when placed on the hooks. Figure 4.6 shows some types of hooks.

In order to be able to tell at a glance whether everything has been returned to the pegboard, carefully draw around each tool with a black felt

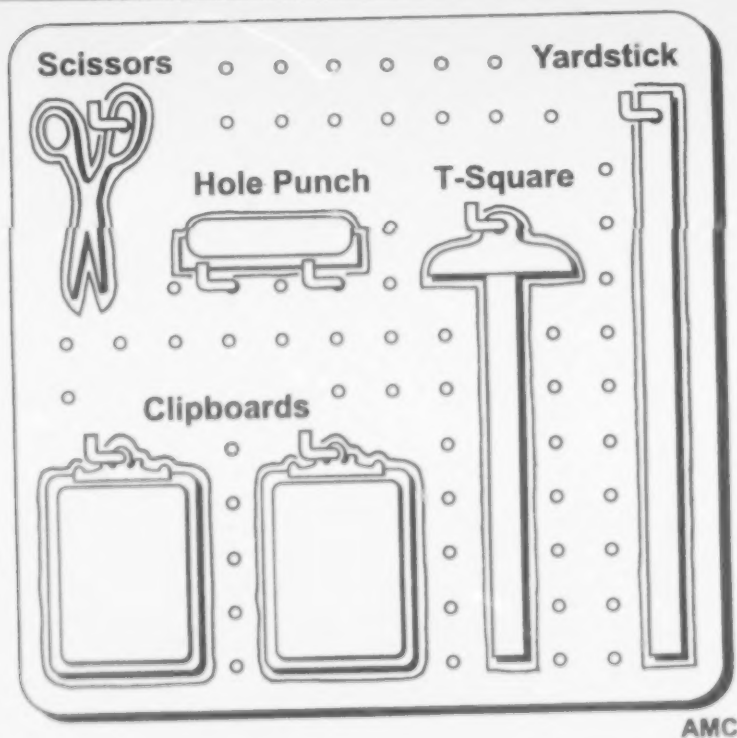


Figure 4.7. Pegboard With Tools Outlined

tip marker (see Figure 4.7). The shape tells you what belongs in that spot. You can see at a glance before the students leave at the end of class if something is missing. Students love to help with finding the missing items.

You might even want to mark off a section of the board with "Teacher Supervision Only!" written on it, in order to prevent children from accidentally taking tools that they shouldn't be using independently, such as the teacher's scissors.

Summary

In this section, we have discussed how to store large tools that are few in number. Specifically, we have discussed:

- ☐ Pegboards

ORGANIZING PHYSICAL EDUCATION EQUIPMENT

In the last section, we discussed pegboards as a way to organize large tools that are few in number. In this section, we will discuss how to organize physical education (PE) equipment. Specifically, we will discuss the following:

- ☐ PE buckets, washtubs, and laundry baskets
- ☐ Color coding equipment
- ☐ Marking equipment
- ☐ Disseminating equipment

PE Buckets, Washtubs, and Laundry Baskets

A PE teacher gave us this idea: PE buckets. Recess or physical education supplies can be stored in plastic buckets that children can carry out to the playground. Smaller pieces of equipment can be stored in kitchen-sized buckets, but larger pieces (such as soccer balls) can be carried either in plastic washtubs with rope handles, or in laundry baskets.

Tape a laminated list of supplies stored in the bucket/washtub/basket to the side so that the child in charge of the bucket can be sure that she has collected all the supplies when recess is over.

Color Coding Equipment

If possible, color code the equipment that your class uses on the playground. The teachers who share the playground with you can agree to a color coding system, such as green for fourth grade, blue for fifth grade, and red for sixth grade. Then you can tell at a glance if the fifth graders have taken away the fourth graders' ball. Of course, not all equipment is available in an array of colors, but take advantage of the equipment that does come in different colors.

Marking Equipment

Each piece of your class's equipment should be marked with your name or initials if you purchased it out of your own pocket. If you purchased the equipment out of your school's funds, then it should be marked with your

room number. Then Mr. Garcia's fourth graders can't say that your green ball belongs to them because your kids (and you) can show them the marking.

Disseminating Equipment

We mentioned earlier that the children can carry the equipment to the playground. In order to make certain that all children get the opportunity to play this important role, tape a laminated list of weeks and student numbers to the side of each bucket. If you have four buckets and 24 students, start one list with the number 1, the second list with the number 7, the third list with the number 13, and so on, having 30 to 36 numbers on each list. You'll want the extra numbers to take care of the transfer students you will receive during the year. The reason we use student numbers instead of names is that with names, we'd have to make a new list each year. A laminated number list can be reused year after year.

In order to make certain who is in charge each week, at the end of the last recess of each week, have that week's equipment people pass the buckets on to the next week's equipment people. That will prevent the "He did it last week!" confusion from arising.

Summary

In this section, we have discussed methods for organizing PE equipment. Specifically, we have discussed the following:

- ☐ PE buckets, washtubs, and laundry baskets
- ☐ Color coding equipment
- ☐ Marking equipment
- ☐ Disseminating equipment

MOVING NONPRINT MATERIALS

In the last section, we discussed how to organize PE equipment. In this section, we once again address the issue of organizing for mobility of materials.

- ☐ Small rolling suitcases with handles

Small Rolling Suitcases With Handles

Finally, once again we want to champion small rolling suitcases with handles as a way to transport nonprint materials. If you are a speech therapist, diagnostician, or other school professional who goes from school to school, you know well the frustrations of trying to move books and equipment back and forth. Small rolling suitcases with handles are for you! Not only are they amazingly convenient, but they look much more professional than cardboard boxes overflowing with materials. And they'll save wear and tear on your back!

Summary

In this section, we have discussed ways of organizing for the mobility of nonprint materials, specifically:

- ☐ Small rolling suitcases with handles

5

"DEJUNKING": TAKING THE CURE

Classrooms seem like they have one-way valves; objects flow in, but they don't flow out. Organized teachers construct psychological valves to let objects flow out of their classrooms. One way they construct these valves is by junking. Junking is hard to do, but makes you feel wonderful once you get started.

BASIC DEJUNKING

In the last chapter, we discussed ways of organizing nonprint materials. In this section, we will discuss organizing by basic junking, because many of those materials you are trying to organize are junk. We will cover the following:

- ☐ Identifying junk
- ☐ Getting rid of nonsentimental junk

Identifying Junk

Millie discovered a wonderful book about 15 years ago: *Clutter's Last Stand* by Don Aslett. She was listening to a radio program in the car when the emcee began interviewing Aslett. Millie was feeling overwhelmed by the

clutter in both her home and her classroom; she went straight to the bookstore and bought a copy. Since that time, she has bought a copy of every one of the books Aslett has published. She has given copies of *Clutter's Last Stand* for birthdays, anniversaries, and wedding presents. She also used *Clutter's Last Stand* as a textbook for her high school special education students. Buy Aslett's book. It might be the best thing you do for yourself this year.

The important ideas presented in this section are gleaned from Aslett's books.

Aslett defines junk as: (a) things that we don't use, or (b) things that don't give us warm fuzzies every time we see them.

Things-That-We-Don't-Use Junk

Connie Deutchland's video of the life of Stalin was junk because she didn't use it. In contrast, her video of desert life wasn't junk, because she used it every year. She dejunked and gave the Stalin video to the library.

Second-Best-Anything Junk

Likewise, a second-best anything is a piece of junk. Aslett uses the example of china. He explains that if you have two sets of china, you should start using the better one and give away the second best. Why have something lovely if you aren't going to use it? If it is unused, it is junk, so use the good china and give the other one away.

Vern, a junior high social studies teacher, used to have two pairs of adult scissors in his desk. He always used the second-best one. He was saving the better pair. He didn't know what he was saving it for, but saving it he was, and he was using the poorer pair. Finally he gave away the poorer pair and began using the better pair. What a pleasure to use a nice sharp pair of scissors! He wondered why he had waited so long.

Memento Junk

As for the second kind of junk, if something nonutilitarian gives you a warm glow inside whenever you see it, it's not junk. If you don't get the warm glow, it is.

Connie's poster of the beach at Galveston was junk because she didn't feel a little glow inside whenever she saw it. Conversely, her poster of a Norwegian troll is not junk, because she does glow inside every time she sees it. Aslett explains that even your fine crystal vase is junk if you don't get a warm glow whenever you see it. In contrast, your refrigerator magnet

of a hummingbird is not junk if you do get the warm fuzzies every time you open the fridge.

Identifying Teacher Junk

For a teacher, classroom junk is (a) anything that we can conduct our class without or (b) anything that we can easily access in the building when we do need it. For example, at one point when Millie was teaching first grade, she found an enormous wooden box outside by the Dumpster. The box was 6 feet long, 4 feet wide, and 3 feet deep. It had a hinged wooden lid. Originally, the box had been made to store playground balls and checkout equipment for recess. Millie dragged the box into her classroom and thought she had a prize.

The Box sat empty for a couple of weeks. Then Millie had a brilliant idea. Or so she thought. She would send a note home with her first graders asking their parents to send recyclable items such as cardboard paper towel cores, tin pie plates, empty milk cartons, and so on. Then she and the children would always have plenty of objects for various types of art activities and for indoor recesses during inclement weather. The Box was full within 2 weeks.

The only problem was that after a couple of weeks, the kids lost interest in the objects in the box. Millie couldn't find any craft ideas to use the materials, but she had collected them, by golly, and she didn't want to let them go. So they took up an enormous amount of space for the rest of the year.

Millie kept The Box and its contents over the summer and into the next school year. During the spring of the second year of having The Box full of unused recyclable trash taking up space, she threw it out. She felt liberated, light, and free. Looking back, she can't understand why she burdened herself with The Box and its contents for so long. In classifying her junk, The Box itself was something that she could teach without, and the recyclables were something that if she did need for a project, the children could easily supply within a few days.

It's initially hard to accept the idea that something is junk in our classrooms if we don't use it, but junk is a relative concept. For example, Millie kept an overhead projector in her classroom for years. She never did use it; she's highly auditorily distractible and can't think when an overhead is on because of the loud fan. Somehow it didn't seem American for a classroom not to have an overhead. But after she read *Clutter's Last Stand*, Millie realized that the overhead was junk to her, so she put it in the equipment storage room and freed up some counter space. Not only did she

not use the overhead, but one would be easy to get if she did need it. The whole thing was relative; to a teacher who did use an overhead, it wasn't junk, but to Millie it was.

That brings us to a touchy subject: trade books. While we do need textbooks for every child, and while it is nice to have a few trade books in the classroom, we don't need many. The school library can take care of our trade book needs. Connie used to spend a ton of money buying trade books, and she used a ton of space storing them. She bought them on every subject for which she had developed a unit: pioneers, wild animals, the ocean, and so on. She used a great deal of space to store the books, and she used each book only one period of one day a year. How inefficient! She finally donated all of her trade books to the school library. Then when she was ready to teach her pioneer unit, she simply gave the school librarian her topic, and the librarian gathered not only the pioneer books that Connie had donated, but all the other pioneer books in the library. Connie had dejunked and freed up space, the library had more books, more children had access to the books, and Connie still had the books when she needed them.

Ditto Connie's copies of teaching magazines, professional books, and the like. She gave those to the school library, too. Other teachers could share her materials, yet she still had access to them when needed, and she dejunked her classroom.

Teachers are particularly susceptible to certain categories of junk. Coffee mugs are a big item. One year, John received nine My Favorite Teacher coffee mugs. John doesn't even drink coffee. Give extra coffee mugs to your church garage sale.

Connie started keeping extra clothes at school. She never, ever used them, but she thought that it was such a good idea to keep a change of clothes at school that she couldn't bear the thought of taking them home. Take them home or give them away.

Ends of border trim rolls are tough things with which to part. You can't do much with a 9-inch piece of border trim, but it seems like such a sin to throw it away. Toss it.

We bet you have at least a dozen pens that don't work or felt tip markers that are nearly dead. Junk 'em.

Do you have a cord to some unknown piece of equipment? Or some odd computer parts from antiquated computers? Out with them.

Do you have old computer hardware or software manuals? Or disks that have errors? Can 'em.

Anything that doesn't work must be thrown away. If you don't have the authority to throw it away, take it down to your principal and let him store it.

Containers are junk if you are not using them. Even first-quality containers are junk if they are not being used. Pass 'em on.

Do you have a stack of magazine articles, convention handouts, or workshop handouts that you are going to read someday? Read them now and then either throw them out or transfer them to the appropriate notebook. If you don't have time to read them right now, then throw them out without reading them. You've done a good job teaching so far without reading them, you'll probably do just fine if you never read them.

Getting Rid of Nonsentimental Junk

Now that you've identified your junk, it's time to get rid of it.

Aslett says to start with things that belong to other people. If you have something borrowed from someone else, a book, video, or whatever, return it to that person today. If that person is another teacher in your building, send a child to him with the whatzit right now!

If you're dealing with your own junk that falls into one of the nonsentimental categories, throw it into the trash immediately. If it's junk that another teacher might need, put it in a "Take What You Want" box in the lounge or workroom. If it's something that the library/media center could use, take it to the librarian/media center specialist. Otherwise put it in the trash.

If it's appropriate to do so, you might even give some of your junk to students. But get rid of it.

You might need to do lots of self-talk in order to start getting rid of junk. Aslett explains that it helps some people to say, "My life is going to be much simpler and more organized. I'm going to have more time for important things when I am not trying to cope with all this STUFF!" When you start seeing the trash can fill with junk, when you start seeing your desk look neater, when you start seeing your room look more professional, you'll have added motivation to continue tossing your clutter.

Summary

In this section we discussed ways of recognizing junk when you see it and of trashing nonsentimental junk.

- ☐ Identifying junk
- ☐ Getting rid of nonsentimental junk

MINIMIZING MEMENTO JUNK

In the last section, we discussed identifying junk and getting rid of nonsentimental junk. Sentimental junk is more difficult, so in this section we address the special problems of mementos.

- ☐ Minimizing mementos with scrapbooks
- ☐ Trashing mementos

Minimizing Mementos With Scrapbooks

Mementos can either be junk because they don't give you a warm glow when you see them, or not be junk because they do give you a glow.

When you're a teacher, it is hard to let go of mementos; however, if you don't cull them, you'll drown in pictures, notes, wildflowers, and other gifts that children give you. Here's a way to minimize the mementos.

Don Aslett points out that we keep mementos to remind us of a special time. He teaches us to keep scrapbooks. In our nonprofessional lives, play programs, pictures of our vacation to Maui, and a ribbon from our daughter's hair when she was baptized are all kept in order to take us back to that special moment. However, Aslett explains that we don't need the entire play program, all the pictures, or the whole ribbon. Cut out just the title of the play, or maybe the title and the date and slip it in the scrapbook. Throw away the rest of the program. Find the best 2 or 3 pictures out of the 40 you took in Maui, trim those into attractive shapes, and put them in the scrapbook. Throw away the rest. No one else wants to be burdened with them. As for the ribbon, 1 inch will go as far in reminding you of the baptism as 2 feet will. Snip off one end of the ribbon, put it in the scrapbook, and throw away the rest. Thank you, Don Aslett!

As for using scrapbooks in our professional life, you can easily see how the program for your third grade play can be minimized. However, you are probably wondering how to get rid of children's gifts to you of pictures and notes. Connie did it this way: She bought a scrapbook with self-stick pages and plastic overlays. She put each child's name on one page. When that child brought her a picture or a love note, Connie first taped it to her filing cabinet for a few days. Then she either placed the whole picture/note in the scrapbook until the child brought another present, or she cut out the most important piece of the picture/note and placed it in the scrapbook. Of course, if she placed the whole picture/note in the scrapbook, she trashed the old picture/note (out of sight of the child) when she replaced it with the

new picture/note. If she simply cut out and saved part of the picture/note, she continued to add to the page until she had a delightful collage that represented her year with that child. She could retrieve a pleasant memory without taking up much space.

Trashing Mementos

If the memento gives you the warm fuzzies, keep it, or keep part of it, in a scrapbook. If it doesn't give you warm fuzzies, put it in the trash or in a garage sale. You have kept the darn thing because you think you will feel guilty if you throw it away or sell it. Just do it!

Paige Smith, a 30-year veteran sixth grade teacher, told us to think about it this way. "I used to collect ceramic pumpkins. After several years of kids knowing I collected pumpkins, I had dozens of them. I felt guilty about getting rid of any of them, but they were driving me crazy. I finally said to myself, 'The kids who gave me pumpkins gave them to me because they love me. They would never want to cause me stress. The pumpkins are stressing me, so the kids who gave them would really want me to get rid of them.' That kind of self-talk helped me put them in a garage sale."

Take your memento junk, that is, the mementos that don't give you the warm fuzzies every time you see them, and throw them in the trash, sell them in a garage sale, or give them away. But whatever you do, do it now.

Summary

In this section we discussed ways of helping you get rid of sentimental junk.

- ☐ Minimizing mementos with scrapbooks
- ☐ Trashing mementos

WEANING YOURSELF AWAY FROM JUNK

In the last section, we discussed getting rid of memento junk. However, you may find it impossible to go cold turkey with your memento junk and even with your nonsentimental junk. This section will help you wean yourself away from junk. Specifically, we will address the following:

- ☐ Sorting to wean
- ☐ The weaning box

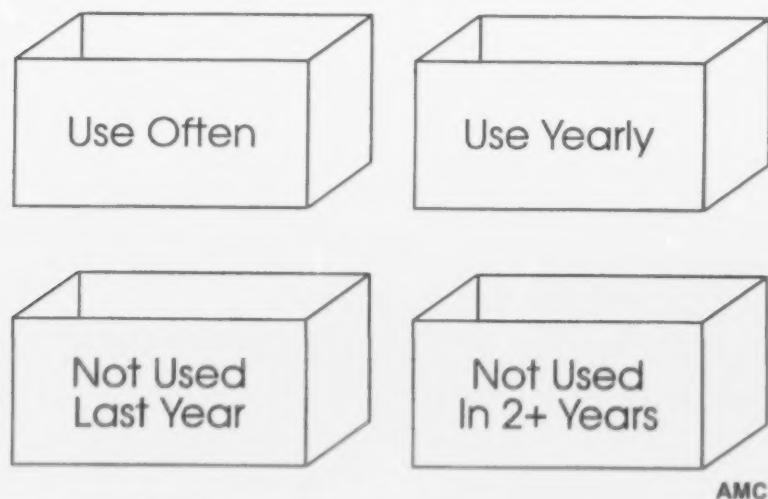


Figure 5.1. Sorting Boxes for Dejunking and Weaning

Sorting to Wean

At first you will find it difficult to get rid of classroom clutter. Don Aslett suggests a way to help you wean yourself. As you go through your classroom shelves/closets, make four stacks (Figure 5.1): (a) things you use frequently (such as scissors, stapler, ruler, etc.); (b) things you use once a year every year (such as the Christmas tree); (c) things you haven't used in the past school year (such as the plastic Eiffel Tower or the poster of Benji); and (d) things you haven't used in 2 or more years (such as the aquarium filter, plastic seaweed, and gravel).

Of course, you will keep the things that you use frequently and you will throw away the things that you haven't used in the past several years. But what of the things used yearly and the things you didn't use last year but might use again this year?

If you use something once a year every year, such as the Christmas tree, decide whether your classroom is actually the best place to store it. Is there a storage room in your building where teachers may store such things (as Millie did the overhead projector)? John says to ask your custodian where you can store these things. He explains that custodians know the locations of little nooks and crannies in the building that you can use, such as under the stairs or in the building's attic.

Could you take the Christmas tree home and store it in the attic? Or is there a hard-to-reach place in your classroom where it would be out of the way? As a rule of thumb, store used-yearly-stuff elsewhere in the building

if you can, store it at home in your attic if you can't store it elsewhere in the building, and store it in a hard-to-get-to place in your classroom if it must stay in the classroom.

The Weaning Box

The items that will give you the most trouble are those that you didn't use last year but that you might want to use later this year or possibly next year, such as the plastic Eiffel Tower. Aslett recommends what to do with those items. Box them up. Secure the box with strapping tape. Write the date on the box in large letters with an indelible marker. Label the box "Stuff I haven't used in the past year." Put the box away in one of the places we mentioned when we talked about the Christmas tree. If you decide you need something from that box at some time in the next year, go get the box, get the item you want, and reseal the box. Then 1 year, or at the most 2 years after you initially sealed the box, give or throw it away. Don't even look inside of it. If you didn't use the items in the year before you initially sealed it, and you haven't used them in the year after you sealed it, they're junk and need to be discarded. The ensuing year should have been long enough to wean you away from your junk.

Make another weaning box for items that are mementos that you simply can't quite part with. By the time they've sat in a sealed box for a year, you'll be weaned from them and can toss the box in the trash.

Summary

In this section, we have discussed ways of getting rid of those items that you can't quite let go. Specifically, we have discussed the following. Check off those about which you feel certain. If you don't feel certain of an item, be sure to reread it.

- ☐ Sorting to wean
- ☐ The weaning box

RECOMMENDED READING

- Aslett, D. (1984). *Clutter's last stand: It's time to dejunk your life!* Cincinnati, OH: Writer's Digest Books.
- Aslett, D. (1994). *The office clutter cure: How to get out from under it all!* Pocatello, ID: Marsh Creek.

6

DECISIONS: FROM SIMPLE TO COMPLEX

One of our colleagues has this sign on her wall: "If you don't have time to do the job right the first time, when are you going to find more time to do it over again?" One of the motivations for teachers to get organized is to escape once and for all from that terrible need to do things more than once. This is especially applicable to making decisions.

A teacher's life is full of decisions. We once heard that an elementary teacher makes over 800 decisions a day! Not being organized at making decisions is a terrible Time Stealer for anyone, but for a teacher, it's disastrous.

First, it steals time that you could be using implementing whatever decision you eventually make. If you know that you want to implement a peace education program, but you can't decide which program you want to use, then your inability to make a decision is keeping you from implementing any peace education program at all.

Second, not being organized at making decisions keeps you from doing other things you want to be doing (such as mentoring kids) because you're all wrapped up in the unmade decision. You can't truly listen to a child if your mind is occupied with an unmade decision.

**Change
gears
now!**

Figure 6.1.

Third, not being organized at making decisions results in your often making poor decisions. That steals time, because if you make a poor decision about what peace education program to use, then your quality teaching time is stolen because you're investing it in trying to teach a poor quality program.

Therefore, organizing your decision making is a crucial Time Stealer Tamer!

As you begin reading this chapter, you're going to need to change gears.

The previous chapters have dealt with very simple, concrete techniques: Make a list. Put supplies in plastic storage drawers. Throw away objects you don't use. In contrast, this chapter, and much of the rest of the book, deals with more abstract organizational strategies. Because the ideas are more abstract, our way of talking about them seems rather different than the way we talked about the more concrete strategies. You might prefer to implement the ideas in the previous chapters for several months before you begin reading and implementing the ideas in this and the following chapters. By implementing lots of concrete organizational strategies, you'll begin to think of yourself as an organized teacher. That change in self-concept may then make it easier for you to begin tackling more abstract organizational ideas.

In this chapter, we'll move from relatively simple abstract ideas of decision making to more complex ideas, but even the most complex decision-making strategies we teach can, and should be, mastered by kids as well as by teachers.

QUICK AND EASY DECISION-MAKING TECHNIQUES

- ☐ Evaluating by external criteria (elimination by aspects)

Evaluating by External Criteria

Evaluating by specified external criteria is a quick, easy, efficient way to make decisions. In 1972, Amos Tversky, a psychologist, began calling this

technique elimination by aspects. The term we use, evaluating by external criteria, is the one used by Benjamin Bloom in his taxonomy of educational objectives.

Here's what you do to evaluate by external criteria:

1. Decide on the criteria you will use in making the decision.
2. Rank your criteria in order of importance to you.
3. Compare two or more alternative choices on each of the criteria in order of importance.
4. Eliminate an alternative when it fails to meet a criterion.

Your choice should be the alternative that meets the most criteria before it is eliminated.

When Fr. Francis Xavier, a parochial school elementary teacher, lived in upstate New York, he was going to develop a new thematic unit. His decision had to do with whether he would create the unit around lighthouses or around caves. Fr. Francis listed his criteria:

- I will be able to find sufficient information to create a unit.
- My theme hasn't been used by teachers at a grade level lower than mine.
- My theme isn't used by teachers at a grade level higher than mine.
- The children will be interested in the theme.
- I will be able to arrange a field trip related to the theme at an affordable price.

Next, Fr. Francis ranked his criteria (Figure 6.2).

1. The children will be interested in the theme.
2. I will be able to find sufficient information to create a unit.
3. My theme isn't used by teachers at a grade level higher than mine.
4. I will be able to arrange a field trip related to the theme at an affordable price.
5. My theme hasn't been used by teachers at a grade level lower than mine.

Fr. Francis then compared each of the themes to each of his criteria. He started with the lighthouse theme. He evaluated it on criterion #1: The children will be interested in the theme. "Yes," he decided, "The kids will like a unit on lighthouses."

<i>Option</i>	<i>Option</i>	<i>Criteria</i>
<i>Lighthouses</i>	<i>Caves</i>	
_____	_____	1. Kids will be interested
_____	_____	2. Sufficient info available
_____	_____	3. Theme not used by later teacher
_____	_____	4. Field trip affordable
_____	_____	5. Theme not used by previous teacher

Figure 6.2. Decision Making by External Criteria, Step 1

Then he evaluated lighthouses on criterion #2: I will be able to find sufficient information to create a unit. "No problem," he thought, "We have some books on lighthouses in the library and I can get more through interlibrary loan. . . . I can teach one science unit on light waves and another on buoyancy. . . . Aquatic birds would be perfect!

"In social studies, we can study the role of ocean transportation in the settlement of America, and we can study the coastal states on both sides of the continent. . . . We can do the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, because Pharos of Alexandria was the first lighthouse, and it was one of the Seven Wonders . . .

"There's plenty of fodder for math instruction, and for language arts, each group can develop a report on a lighthouse. . . . Art will be a blast because we'll use our math to create scale models of our lighthouses!

"For music, we might do old sailors' songs, or maybe I can find a lighthouse song . . ."

Next, Fr. Francis compared lighthouses to his third criterion. "No, no one in fifth or sixth grade does a lighthouse unit. Ms. Fincher does one on crabbing, but that won't be a problem."

On the fourth criterion, the affordable field trip, Fr. Francis had to make a couple of phone calls. He found that he could take the children to a lighthouse for only the cost of the bus. His principal agreed to provide the transportation to a lighthouse that was 50 miles away. The school cooks would make sack lunches. "Okay," Fr. Francis said to himself, "We have an affordable field trip."

On the fifth criterion, Fr. Francis checked with the kindergarten through fourth grade teachers. He found that one of the first grade teachers did a thematic unit on lighthouses. "Lighthouses don't meet my fifth criterion," he said to himself (Figure 6.3).

Next, Fr. Francis began to compare caves as a theme to each of his criteria.

Option	Option	Criteria
Lighthouses	Caves	
+		1. Kids will be interested
+		2. Sufficient info available
+		3. Theme not used by later teacher
+		4. Field trip affordable
0		5. Theme not used by previous teacher

Figure 6.3. Decision Making by External Criteria, Step 2

"Yes," he said to himself, "The kids will like a unit on caves."

Then he compared caves to his second criterion: "We have scads of information on caves. My geology unit would fit perfectly here . . .

"In math, we could pretend like we were colonizing a cave, and that would have endless possibilities . . . It would also be good in social studies for learning about various types of governments and the ways that governments meet the needs of their people . . .

"For language arts, we could develop a newspaper to inform the rest of the world about the goings-on in our cave colony . . .

"For art, we could study cave paintings, and make a mural of our own cave paintings out in the hall . . .

"Music . . . We could study some state songs and write our own colony song!

"Caves meet this criterion!" he announced to himself, who was all ears.

Caves were then compared to the next criterion, whether or not a fifth or sixth grade teacher used caves as a thematic unit. He asked around and found out that Mrs. Rodriguez in sixth grade had just finished developing a unit on caves.

"That's it," Fr. Francis said to himself. "Caves didn't meet my third criterion." His decision was made. Lighthouses would be the theme (Figure 6.4).

Summary

In this section, we discussed a fast and simple way of organizing your decision making. Before you read on, make a simple decision (such as what you want to eat for dinner) using this strategy to make sure that you understand it. Then check off the strategy and read on.

- ☐ Evaluating by external criteria (elimination by aspects)

Option	Option	Criteria
<i>Lighthouses</i>	<i>Caves</i>	
+	+	1. Kids will be interested
+	+	2. Sufficient info available
+	0	3. Theme not used by later teacher
+		4. Field trip affordable
0		5. Theme not used by previous teacher

Figure 6.4. Decision Making by External Criteria, Step 3

MORE COMPLETE DECISION-MAKING TECHNIQUES

In the last section, we presented a quick and easy model for organizing your decision making. In this section, we examine two more complete models of decision making:

- ☐ The additive model of decision making
- ☐ The PMI

The Additive Model of Decision Making

In the additive model of decision making (see Reed, 1996), you rate each of your alternatives from 1 to 5 on each of your criteria. The alternative with the higher score is the one you select. Here's an example.

Brannin wanted to implement a peace education program developed by his school district. The district had developed two programs over the years: Peace Full and Kids for Peace. Brannin had to decide which program he was going to implement.

First he had to decide on his criteria. He decided that the criteria were: that the program (a) include role-playing, (b) community involvement, (c) school involvement outside of the classroom, and (d) conflict resolution training. He listed his criteria under each alternative program.

Brannin then examined each program and rated it from 1 to 5 on each of the criteria. For example, Peace Full included extensive role-playing, while Kids for Peace included only moderate role-playing. After Brannin rated each program on each criterion, he totaled the scores and selected Kids for Peace, the program with the higher overall score (Figure 6.5).

An advantage of the additive model over the elimination model is that it indicates whether one alternative is significantly better than another, or only

Option	Option	Criteria
Peace Full	Kids for Peace	
5	3	Role-playing
4	5	Community involvement
4	5	School (out of class) involvement
0	5	Conflict resolution training
13	18	Total

Figure 6.5. Additive Model of Decision Making

slightly better than another: Does one alternative score 22 and the other 21, or does one alternative score 22 and the other 11? However, a disadvantage to the model is that it does not prioritize criteria, assuming instead that all criteria are equally important.

The PMI

A teacher of decision making, Dr. Edward de Bono, wrote about the PMI, another way to evaluate something. PMI stands for plus, minus, and interesting.

Let's go back to Fr. Francis and his unit on lighthouses. At the end of the unit, Fr. Francis wanted to evaluate each child's performance in the project. As her part of her group's project, Ebonee had mapped the East Coast and located all of the well-known lighthouses. Fr. Francis did a PMI to decide what grade Ebonee should receive. He started with the positive aspects (pluses) of her work.

"Positive things . . . let's see . . .

"Well, first, her map is very accurately drawn . . . The coastline looks like a coastline, it's not smooth and artificial looking. . . . She drew the states along the coastline completely, instead of drawing only the coastline. . . . She labeled the states. . . . She numbered each lighthouse and along the borders of the map she drew a good accurate reproduction of each house keyed so that it can be located on the map.

"Those are very positive things." Fr. Francis recorded the positive things under the *plus* category (Figure 6.6).

Next, Fr. Francis evaluated the negative things about the map.

"Negatives . . . let's see . . .

"Well, first, she misspelled Massachusetts. . . . Also, she switched the location of two of the lighthouses. . . . She omitted the directional key and a scale . . .

<i>Plus</i>	<i>Interesting</i>	<i>Minus</i>
accurately drawn		
good coast		
complete states		
states labeled		
lighthouses numbered		
lighthouses well drawn		

Figure 6.6. Positive Attributes in PMI Evaluation

<i>Plus</i>	<i>Interesting</i>	<i>Minus</i>
accurately drawn		misspelled MA
good coast		2 locations wrong
complete states		omitted key & scale
states labeled		
lighthouses numbered		
lighthouses well drawn		

Figure 6.7. Positive and Negative Attributes in PMI Evaluation

"That's all that I can see that's negative," he said to himself. He then recorded the negative elements under the minus category (Figure 6.7).

Turning his thoughts to the interesting things, Fr. Francis said to himself, "The fact that she colored the water green instead of a more traditional blue is certainly interesting . . .

"Drawing crabs, whales, and octopi in the ocean was an interesting touch . . .

"Putting a Japanese whaler on the east coast together with the USS Teddy Roosevelt was certainly an interesting touch . . ." (Figure 6.8).

Based upon his observation of the positive, negative, and interesting aspects of her project, Fr. Francis made the decision to give her a grade of A.

Summary

In this section, we have discussed two models of decision making that are more thorough than the elimination model. Before you proceed, make a simple decision using each of the models. You might again want to use the subject of your dinner in order to get a feel for how the different models

<i>Plus</i>	<i>Interesting</i>	<i>Minus</i>
accurately drawn	colored H ₂ O green	misspelled MA
good coast	crabs, whale, etc.	2 locations wrong
complete states	Japanese whaler & USS T. R.	omitted key & scale
states labeled		
lighthouses numbered		
lighthouses well drawn		

Figure 6.8. Positive, Negative, and Interesting Attributes in PMI Evaluation

would work. Once you have successfully used each model, check it off and read the next section.

- ☐ The additive model of decision making
- ☐ The PMI

THE BEST AND MOST COMPLETE MODEL OF DECISION MAKING

In the last section, we discussed two moderately thorough models of organizing your decision making, one of which was a basic approach by Dr. Edward de Bono, who has conducted a great deal of research in decision making. In this section, we will thoroughly discuss de Bono's more sophisticated "hats" approach, a very thorough but elegantly simple method of organizing your decision making.

- ☐ De Bono's Six Thinking Hats

De Bono's Six Thinking Hats

Whereas competent and motivated teachers habitually use a complete decision-making process, some teachers make inadequate decisions on important matters by using only one or two dimensions of thinking. For example, some teachers make their decisions based primarily on information; they have heard that knowledge is power, and once they have what seems to be enough information, they decide in favor of the direction that the information seems to be heading. Sometimes this reliance on facts is given a sparkle of credibility by turning it into a computer printout.

In contrast, some teachers make decisions by just following their hearts. Their decisions take the direction of their emotions and intuitions at the time. They might spend their whole year's supply budget on darling bulletin board materials, and then not have money to replace worn-out math materials. The emotional appeal of the bulletin board materials loses much of its luster when there are more kids to be taught math than there are sets of math materials with which to teach them.

Some teachers are attracted to novelty. They delight in finding a different approach to a problem. In making decisions, they favor the most creative option, regardless of whether or not it is workable.

Making the right decision the first time saves money and (most important) time.

It's possible that a few people have been born with the gift of organized thinking that leads to good decisions, but it's an acquired skill for all the rest of us. As you've seen throughout this chapter, we learn to organize our thinking, just as we learn how to construct a complete sentence, solve an equation, or make chocolate chip cookies. So, if we all can learn to organize our thinking, which of the many approaches is the very best one to learn?

The best approach to organized thinking is extensively used by successful corporations whose decisions have millions of dollars riding on them. In addition, the organized thinking used by successful businesses is uncomplicated enough for us to use individually as we make decisions for our classroom and for our personal lives. We discovered such an approach. It has an excellent track record of success and works as well in the classroom as it does in the boardroom. We believe the best approach to organized thinking is Dr. Edward de Bono's *Six Thinking Hats*. Dr. de Bono's decision-making skills are good not only for teachers, they also enable students to use organized thinking in social studies, English, science, and all other subjects.

De Bono's approach is generally called "the hats" because he urges us to "put on your thinking hat." The hats are easy to learn and have many uses for teachers and for students, too. Because we are so thoroughly sold on the hats model of organizing decision making, we believe that teachers have an obligation to teach their students how to use this model to organize their own thinking. Instead of a moderate discussion of the hats in this chapter, and then another moderate discussion in the chapter on helping students to organize themselves, we will cover the hats very thoroughly in this chapter, and then simply remind you about them in the chapter on helping students to organize themselves.

De Bono uses six "thinking hats" to organize thinking. Employing the full set of six hats guarantees that all important dimensions of a decision

have been considered. This confidence of thoroughness calms that terrible nagging feeling that your decision has overlooked something that will surely come back to haunt you. When students learn to organize their thinking by using all six hats, their thinking is thorough, and also gender free.

Gender stereotypes pop up all over, even among school people, who should know better. We would like to believe that girls and boys would be spared typecasting in school. But, until all students are carefully taught to organize their thinking with the full set of six thinking skills, boys will be assumed to be engineering types and girls will be steered toward English and the arts. de Bono's desire is for all of us to organize our thinking by mastering all six thinking skills, regardless of gender, age, race, or ethnic background. Perhaps the worst aspect of gender stereotyping is that some thinking skills are considered more noble than others.

We teachers are all familiar with the hierarchy of Benjamin Bloom: knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. His vertical paradigm implies that some skills are more important than others. Indeed, he clearly says that the top four (application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation) are the more desirable higher-order thinking skills, and that the bottom two (knowledge and comprehension) are less desirable skills.

In contrast to Bloom's vertical structure, if we were to illustrate de Bono's six hats thinking skills the arrangement would be horizontal. This implies that all of the six hats thinking skills are equally important for everyone. The red hat, the blue hat, the yellow hat, all the hats are equally important. Let's think about each hat in turn.

The blue hat indicates process control. When wearing our blue hats, we look not at the subject of our thinking, but at the thinking itself. This is similar to the conductor of an orchestra, responsible for maintaining an overview of what all the instruments are doing. We wear this hat when planning and organizing.

The white hat is neutral. It is for facts. "Let's do some white hat thinking" is a request for information, not opinions. While wearing this hat you could also list the information you need but do not have. (Note that the white hat may be colored beige in some schools where racial or ethnic misunderstandings would be likely.)

The red hat invites us to share our feelings, emotions, hunches, and intuitions. These are valuable for making good decisions. Ordinarily, we believe we have to create logic to support our feelings. We often disguise our feelings as facts. Red hat thinking allows you to express your personal opinion without having to defend it at all. There also is an understanding that your gut feeling may alter over time, and you will not have to justify

that change, either. For some people it is difficult to imagine a CEO and a corporate Board of Directors tuning into their feelings. But de Bono's research shows that successful businesses do it regularly.

The gray hat represents cautious thinking and judgment. It is the one we have to use a lot in making decisions, especially in schools. It prevents us from making mistakes. When wearing a gray hat you think of all the reasons why a thing may not succeed. It must be logical, otherwise it would be emotional (red hat). (Note that de Bono's book originally called cautious thinking "black hat thinking." We prefer the gray hat to avoid unintended racial or ethnic overtones.)

The yellow hat is optimistic, hopeful, and positive. When wearing your yellow hat, you give all the reasons why a thing will surely succeed. It must be logical, otherwise it would be emotional (red hat).

The green hat represents energy and growth. This is the creative hat. This hat calls for many varied and unusual ideas. Even the wildest proposals are listed without prejudice. Sometimes the best idea eventually emerges from the suggestion that was initially considered very weird. Some people (mainly adult people) are not used to thinking creatively and find it quite uncomfortable at first. Courses or workshops in creativity are helpful. With practice, everyone can learn new and better ways to think.

Learning new and better ways to think is a challenge for some people. For adults, thinking habits may be deeply ingrained and using real hats (or visors or headbands) at first can be essential. Old habits are often tough to overcome, even when you understand why they should be changed. For kids in Grades 2 through 12, using real hats (or visors or headbands) is fun and the learning is fast. Some adults, however, are too uptight to use learning aides such as real hats. For any age group, role playing is an effective way to learn something new as quickly as possible. The idea is to play-act yourself as a creative thinker (or a factual thinker, etc.). Once the new habits have been mastered, wearing real hats (or visors or headbands) is replaced with a single set of six hats (one of each color) saved as symbols to remind everyone to think all the same way at the same time.

Everyone thinking the same way at the same time is especially important for business decisions, since many are made in groups. These days plenty of school decisions are made or influenced by school improvement committees, vertical teams, and so on. When working in a group, it is critically important that all are on the same page at the same time. Ineffective decision-making groups take this literally, and ask members to use only the same factual information at the same time. The maxim means much more than that. Effective decision-making groups make sure that everyone is using the same type of thinking at the same time. For example, everyone is doing

red hat thinking (feelings) at the same time. Then the group may switch to another type of thinking (maybe white hat) and again all use the same thinking skill at the same time. It's amazing how much more quickly a group works with this one improvement.

Improvements can be made in our classroom instruction, too. Good decision-making skills can be easily taught to your students. Organized thinking enhances your instruction, no matter what subject or grade level. The research on using hats in the classroom is just beginning, but the comments so far indicate that elementary and secondary students learn the skills readily. Here's an example of how the organized thinking of the hats approach can help structure a discussion of a K-2 trip to a fire station. de Bono mentioned a trip to a fire station and we developed it like this:

- | | |
|--------|--|
| white | Tell us a fact about the firefighters' boots. |
| red | How did you feel about their rain coats? |
| red | How did their trucks make you feel? |
| yellow | What are some good things about fire stations? |
| gray | What might go wrong at a fire station? |
| green | Let's list all the different ways we can say thanks to the firefighters. |
| blue | Let's plan our thank-you notes. What should we say first? |

In addition to structuring a class discussion, a teacher can easily teach the hats skills by verbalizing how her thinking is organized. This is a great technique; students often don't realize the thinking processes an adult uses. Here's an example of a classroom decision verbalized by a teacher in Grades 3-5.

"With my white hat on I saw the fact of dark clouds moving in. Using my green hat, I thought of a creative way we could avoid losing our playground time this afternoon without missing math. Employing yellow hat thinking, changing our time for math would be good because we could get outside to play. Wearing a gray hat, changing our math time might not work if we are not serious about math after playing outside. With my red hat on, I feel good about giving it a try. How about you?" The children responded that they'd like to give it a try, too, so the teacher continued by asking, "Using our blue hats, what should we do first before going outside? What should we plan to do as soon as we come inside?"

The hats approach to organized thinking is appropriate for nearly any subject. Below is an example of its use in a Grade 3-5 science lesson concerning amphibians.

_____	I hate that idea.	(red)
_____	It won't work because of parents.	(gray)
_____	We would have lots of money to do other things.	(yellow)
_____	Which sports? Gym class, too?	(white)
_____	Maybe we could rent the gym advertising to businesses, or sell candy.	(green)
_____	We need more info. How can we get other people's opinions about this?	(blue)

Figure 6.9. Example of de Bono's Thinking Hats With Students in Grades 6 Through 8

"Using our white hats, one fact we found was that some turtles can live to be a hundred years old. With your yellow hats on, what do you think are some advantages to living that long?

"Putting on your gray hats, what do you think are some disadvantages of living that long?

"Using your green hats, what are some creative things you could do if you lived for a hundred years or more?

"Do some red hat thinking and tell me how you feel about living that long yourself.

"Now put on your blue hats and tell us how you plan to find out more about longevity. Will you be ready to discuss it more tomorrow?

One of the most important reasons for teaching your students the hats structure is to equip them to organize their thinking so they will make good decisions and judgments. To do this well, they need to be able to recognize the different types of thinking. Figure 6.9 gives a sample that teachers in Grades 6-8 might use. The students are asked to imagine that a controversial proposal has been made that would ban interscholastic sports from the school budget and during the school day. An answer for each item is included on the right in parentheses. The students' task would be to identify the type of thinking represented by each of the items in Figure 6.9.

As you get into teaching your students to organize their thinking, you may encounter negative peer influences, especially among teens. Sometimes organized thinking is not cool. The hats approach gives teens a way of avoiding peer blame for thinking. Here are some examples of things kids in Grades 6-8 might say to keep their thinking organized while minimizing criticisms from other teens:

blue	What exactly is the problem?
red	What are your initial feelings about it?
white	What are the facts?
green	What are some possible things you could do?
yellow	What are some advantages of the green hat ideas?
gray	What are some disadvantages of the green hat ideas?
blue	Based on the advantages and disadvantages, summarize the green ideas in order of "most likely to work."
red	Which green hat idea do you like best now?
blue	If necessary, revise your summary chart.
gray	Review the risks of the top-ranking ideas.
red	What are your final feelings?
blue	What is your plan of action?

Figure 6.10. Example of de Bono's Hats With High School Students

"That isn't me, it's just some wild and crazy creativity."

"I don't know what I'll end up doing, but my feeling right now is . . ."

"Hey, aren't we supposed to think of some possible problems with that?"

"You *do* want me to say, 'on the other hand,' don't you?"

"Hey, aren't we supposed to think of some possible advantages to that?"

As the early teens of junior high mature into late teens of senior high, real-life problem situations can be a teacher's main vehicle to show students how to organize their thinking for good decision making. Figure 6.10 gives a sample of a typical full hats sequence to deal with the problem of adults intimidated by groups of teens hanging around in the neighborhood.

As Figure 6.10 illustrates, an individual needs to be skilled in the use of every hat. That is an important idea for group decision making, too. Each member of the group must be able to organize her thinking from all six perspectives. This is crucial to avoiding stereotypes such as, "Jose's our creative one," or "Sally is the only person on our committee who is a good planner." To help your students master the full set of thinking skills, we suggest doing a needs assessment. This is similar to the classic diagnose-and-prescribe technique promoted by John Dewey. Figure 6.11 shows a sample profile of a student's thinking skills. Notice that it is in the form of a bar graph. To have well-organized thinking, what individual skills does this student need to work on?

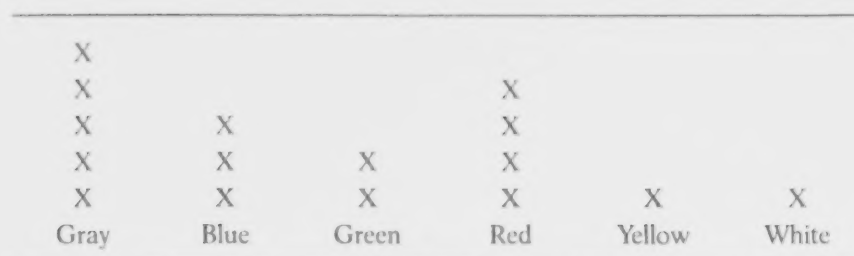


Figure 6.11. Bar Graph of Student's Thinking Skills #1

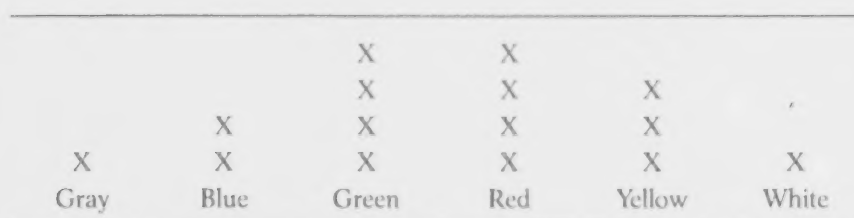


Figure 6.12. Bar Graph of Student's Thinking Skills #2

All teachers are familiar with student diversity and individualized needs. In the area of organized thinking skills, student differences may be the greatest. Fortunately, remediation in this area is typically very easy. Let's consider another student with a unique profile (Figure 6.12). What skills should this student practice to become a well-organized thinker?

A good way to help secondary students begin to practice organizing their thinking is to focus them on a problem and conduct a class meeting that develops a solution to the problem. We recommend giving the students an agenda for the class meeting. This agenda should contain all six types of thinking. The agenda organizes their thinking and provides a model for them to use in other meetings. Your goal as a teacher is to encourage your students to develop the habit of thinking in an organized way. Figure 6.13 shows a sample agenda that includes all six types of thinking.

As they become more skillful, you may help your students learn to organize their thinking by challenging them to use all six thinking skills to study an issue in a small group and create a written report to be handed in to you. See Figure 6.14 for a rubric for the report to the teacher from a group of students. Notice that it requires the whole group to exercise all six of the thinking skills. If they make (and use) real hats (or visors or headbands), you can tell at a glance which skills they are using and whether all members of the group are thinking from the same perspective at the same time.

-
- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Organize the meeting. | A. Select recorder(s) for this topic.
(Use easel or overhead projector.) |
| | B. Select a chair for this topic. |
| | C. Clarify the topic (specific problem). |
| 2. What are the facts? | A. List what we're sure of. |
| | B. List additional facts we'll need. |
| 3. Analyze the proposal. | A. List favorable aspects. |
| | B. List unfavorable aspects. |
| 4. Revise list of facts we'll need. | |
| 5. Look for alternatives that might overcome the more serious disadvantages without losing the major advantages. List all the creative options we can, even the crazy ideas. | |
| 6. List our current gut-level feelings about each of the alternatives. We can revise these later. Accept all of our feelings without criticism. | |
| 7. Organize for the next meeting. | A. When and where? |
| | B. Homework assignments. |
| 8. Adjourn. | |
-

Figure 6.13. Sample Agenda Using de Bono's Hats

The topic our committee studied was:
 The members of our committee were:
 The date of this report is:
 Our recommendation is:
 The process we used was:
 The facts we found were:
 The feelings we uncovered were:
 The creative alternatives we considered were:
 Optimistically, the reasons our proposal should work are:
 Cautiously, the reasons our proposal might not work are:

Figure 6.14. Sample Rubric for a Write-Up of a Committee Meeting

After your students practice using the hats to organize their thinking a few times, you may want to quiz them to diagnose their understanding. Figure 6.15 gives a sample quiz that will quickly reveal misunderstandings and allow you to reteach effectively where necessary.

In addition to organizing your thinking as a teacher and to teaching your students to organize their thinking, don't overlook organizing your own personal decisions. This would especially benefit you on major decisions. Once you become comfortable with this organized approach, you will

chapter. But please, please, at your first opportunity, teach your students to use the strategy themselves.

☐ De Bono's Six Thinking Hats

RECOMMENDED READING

- de Bono, E. (1985). *Six thinking hats*. Boston: Little, Brown.
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7

ORGANIZING YOUR TEACHING

Of all the things teachers need to have well organized, lesson planning is one of the most crucial. The teacher with world-class teaching skills is helpless without good lesson plans, and having an organized approach to lesson planning can help ensure good plans.

Once you have planned a well-organized lesson, using good organization to teach the lesson is a key to being an effective teacher. We'll cover both planning and the teaching act in this chapter.

Last, we'll discuss an organizational strategy for increasing your students' performance on standardized assessments.

Like the previous chapter and those following, this chapter deals with more abstract concepts than the earlier chapters dealt with, so you'll need to continue reading in the gear you shifted into when you began reading the decision-making chapter. Stay in that low gear while you work your way through this and the following chapters.

One of the strategies that we will use to help you think about the abstract concepts in this chapter is that of offering you both positive and negative examples of good organization of planning. Bruce Joyce and Marsha Weil, leading researchers in learning, tell us that research on concept learning shows us that in order to learn a new concept, we need not only clear positive examples, but clear negative ones as well. Only by seeing the positive examples in contrast to the negative ones will you be fully able to grasp the concept.

THE CONTENT

In the last chapter, we discussed ways to organize your thinking. In this section, we will discuss ways to organize your content to prepare for your lesson planning. We will present the following:

- ☐ Starting with the curriculum
- ☐ Concept analyses and hierarchies

Starting With the Curriculum

We interviewed an elementary principal and asked: What is the biggest problem you see with your teachers?

The principal answered, "Teachers don't start their planning with the curriculum. They plan activities without giving a thought to the curriculum required by the state for their grade level. Teachers want to teach fun things, not things that are dry. Suppose a couple of teachers go off to a workshop. They learn some fun activities, so they come back and want to do those activities. No matter that the activities don't match the curriculum for their grade, the teachers will use those activities anyway. What you end up with is that every teacher at every grade level in your building teaches a unit on dinosaurs, while no one teaches oil production."

So, point number one: Start your planning with the curriculum. Don't start it with an idea for a fun activity or with what's written in a textbook. Start your planning with the curriculum.

Concept Analyses and Hierarchies

Without a doubt, you learned how to do a task analysis when you were a teacher education student. However, you may not have been taught how to construct a *concept* analysis and a concept hierarchy.

The most useful thing we do in planning is start with a concept analysis and a concept hierarchy. A concept analysis describes a concept's characteristics, related concepts, and examples. Nonexamples added to a concept analysis help define the concept. Best examples of a concept are called prototypes.

Related concepts are of three types: superordinate, coordinate, and subordinate. Superordinate concepts are larger categories into which a concept fits; coordinate concepts are parallel concepts; and subordinate concepts are subsets of the concept we're examining.

Hair	
Characteristics: body covering of mammals; various textures and colors	
Related concepts:	
Superordinate:	animal body coverings
Coordinate:	scales, feathers, exoskeletons
Subordinate:	function, structure, types
Examples:	
	prototype—bear's fur
	human head hair
	human beard
	sheep's wool
	dog's fur
Non-examples:	
	chicken's feathers
	lizard's scales
	grasshopper's exoskeleton

Figure 7.1. Concept Analysis of Hair

A concept hierarchy is a graphic representation of a concept's superordinate, coordinate, and subordinate concepts.

Suppose that the concept that we're going to teach is *hair*. The first thing we do is go to a source to learn enough about hair to conduct a concept analysis and construct a concept hierarchy. Don't assume that you already know enough about a concept to conduct a concept analysis and construct a concept hierarchy. This is an error that some interns make. They create very poor concept analyses and hierarchies because they think, "Oh, I know enough about hair [or whatever the concept is] to make a concept analysis and hierarchy." They don't. Unless you're regarded as an authority in a field, always go to a book about the topic, an encyclopedia, or an Internet resource prepared by an authority in the field.

Only after you've sought out a source of authority on the topic will you be prepared to make a concept analysis and hierarchy. Since we started with the concept *hair*, let's use it as an example. Figures 7.1 and 7.2 provide an example of a concept analysis and a concept hierarchy, respectively, that we constructed after we researched the topic in our multimedia encyclopedia. Only when you can see the big picture of your concept will you be able to plan how to teach it.

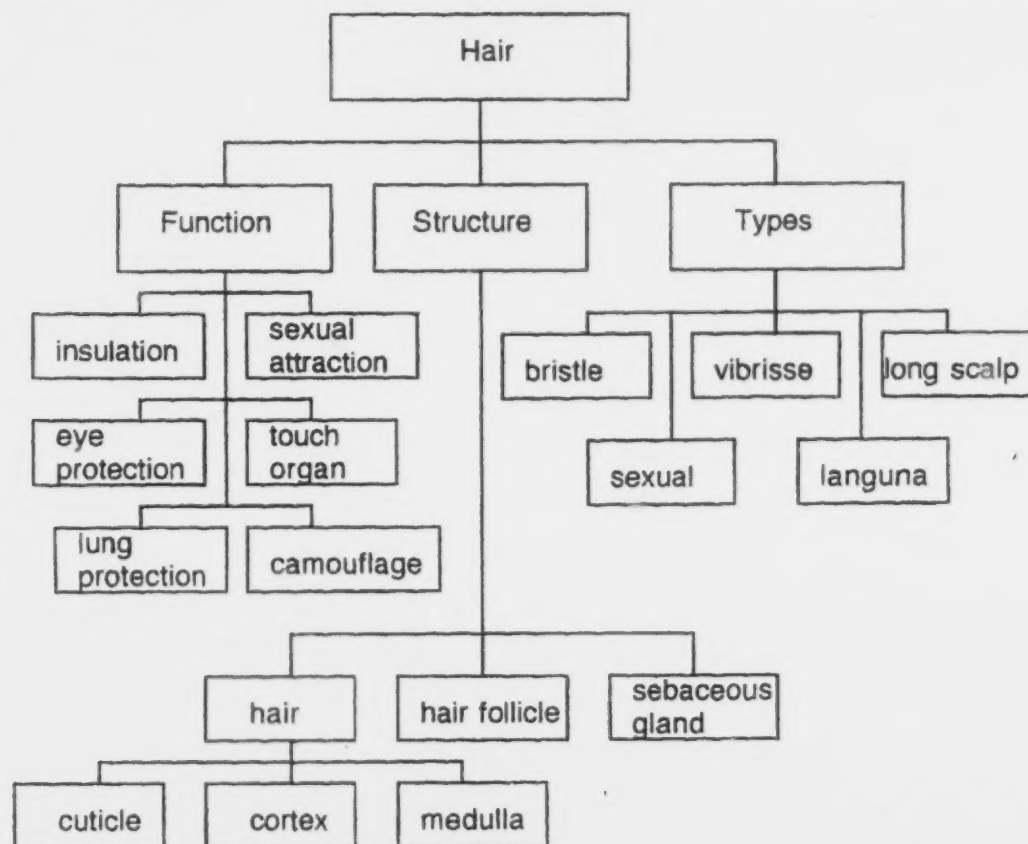


Figure 7.2. Partial Concept Hierarchy of Hair

Summary

In this section, we have presented information concerning organizing your content to prepare for lesson planning. Specifically, we have presented information on the following topics. Stopping now to review your grade level curriculum and to conduct a concept analysis and hierarchy on a topic in the curriculum is a good strategy before proceeding. When you have reviewed the curriculum and conducted a concept analysis and hierarchy, check off the following items and continue reading.

- ☐ Start with the curriculum
- ☐ Concept analyses and hierarchies

THE LESSON-PLANNING PROCESS

In the previous section, we discussed organizing the content that you are going to teach. In this section, we discuss ways of organizing the planning of how you are going to teach the content.

Specifically, we will discuss the following organizational approaches:

- ☐ Interdisciplinary lesson plans
- ☐ Matching goals to objectives to objectives to activities
- ☐ Matching assessments to objectives
- ☐ Personalizing your lesson plan forms

Interdisciplinary Plans

If you are not already using interdisciplinary planning, you have missed an excellent way to organize yourself for teaching. You probably already know what a unit plan is: one in which you develop lessons across the curriculum around a theme, such as Fr. Francis Xavier did with lighthouses. Making a graphic display of your interdisciplinary plan will help you to organize it more effectively. Figure 7.3 shows Fr. Francis's graphic display of his interdisciplinary unit.

Matching Goals to Objectives to Objectives to Activities

We use the strange term "matching goals to objectives to objectives to activities" to emphasize the fact that disorganization can cause us to fail in teaching what we're supposed to be teaching anywhere along the track from goal to long-term objective to the day's objective to the lesson activities of the day. But don't despair! Good organization can help us ensure that everything matches correctly!

Matching Long-Term Objectives to Goals

You may wonder why we included this section at all. We included it because we are constantly surprised by how many teachers don't match their long-term objectives to their goals.



Figure 7.3. Web Organizer of Interdisciplinary Curricula

For example, one science goal in many states' curricula is: *to use scientific processes to conduct investigations*. Suppose that is the goal Ms. Herrera thinks she is addressing. But Ms. Herrera takes a look at her textbook and writes a long-term objective to match what is in the textbook, stating: *The students will identify the various ecosystems in and around bodies of water*. Absolutely no connection exists between the goal and the objective.

We see this again and again when we visit in teachers' classrooms. Teachers tend to fall into this trap when they teach the textbook; the textbook

may not be a good tool at all to use in addressing your state's or district's curricular goals.

Ms. Herrera could write this long-term objective to match her goal: *The students will conduct observational research on the kinds of and numbers of animals living around the pond behind the school.* While Ms. Herrera's textbook doesn't help her organize her teaching to match the state curriculum, the environment in which she and her students live can help her make the match.

This is not to say that the textbook might not be an excellent approach to meeting the state curriculum. To the extent that it helps a teacher meet her curricular goals, it should be used. We simply offer the caveat that the textbook may disrupt your organizational plan of matching goals to objectives to objectives to activities.

*Matching Instructional (Short-Term)
Objectives to Long-Term Objectives*

Just as we have found that many teachers do not make their long-term objectives match their goals, we have also found that even more frequently, teachers do not match their instructional objectives to their long-term objectives. (Other terms that are used interchangeably with the term *instructional objectives* are *short-term objectives* and *daily objectives*.)

An example from our practice: A teacher's long-term objective was: *Given a world map and a gazetteer, students will use map interpretation skills (with 80% accuracy) to: find locations, calculate distance between two locations, and determine locations on the map where the land areas are distorted in size by more than 30% due to the projection.*

The day we observed her teach, the teacher's instructional objective was that students would *pick out a country that they would like to visit, read about it in the encyclopedia, pretend they were visiting there, and write a postcard to a friend.* That would be a fine instructional objective for some other long-term objective, but it was not a good instructional objective for learning to use map interpretation skills to find locations, calculate distance between two locations, and determine where on the map land areas are distorted due to the projection.

You may be thinking that the students were told to use map interpretation skills to find locations and calculate the distance from their town to the place they were visiting, but the teacher did not require that they do so. Even if she had required that they do so, having a child only find one place and calculate the distance to that one place is not sufficient practice in a lesson. We know that Academic Learning Time (ALT) is the best predictor of

student achievement. In order to have had good ALT for this objective, the students should have spent the entire instructional time practicing one or more of the skills in the long-term objective.

Here, then, are some examples of instructional objectives used by another teacher we observed whose instructional objectives matched the long-term objective of using the map skills identified when given a world map and a gazetteer.

1. Given the names of the capitals of 12 African countries, students will state the location (latitude and longitude) of each.
2. Given the names of capitals of eight European countries, students will calculate the distance between Baghdad and each capital.
3. Given a Mercator map and a blank map worksheet, students will outline in red the areas in which the projection distorts the size of the land by more than 30%.

Matching Lesson Activities to Instructional Objectives

We also see problems when we examine the activities that some teachers use in a lesson. Some teachers use activities that are totally unrelated to their instructional objectives. Case in point: One of our interns, we'll call her Maxine, conducted the following demonstration lesson:

Goal:	To develop social studies concepts and skills
Long-Term Objective:	The students will employ time lines to hypothesize cause and effect.
Instructional Objective:	After listening to the story <i>One Cold Windy Day</i> , the students will be able to identify events in time relative to other events, using the terms <i>first</i> , <i>second</i> , <i>third</i> , and <i>before</i> , <i>next</i> , and <i>after</i> by constructing a time line.

First Maxine read the story to her students. Then Maxine and the students discussed the events and their relation to each other. So far so good! But then she had the students draw and color a picture of a windy day! The students never made a time line; instead they spent the time that they should have spent constructing the time line on drawing and coloring a picture!

Sherilyn was another intern who used *One Cold Windy Day* to address the same objective, but she did plan activities that matched her objective.

First Sherilyn read the story aloud. Then she had the class as a group name each event, which she then represented by a picture on tagboard. Next, two students went to the board and each chose a tagboard event. Each student held up the tagboard on which their event was depicted. The students then asked the class which event came first, and they then arranged their bodies (holding the tagboard) in the correct order.

Other students joined them one at a time and the class told the new students where to stand on the time line. The teacher kept asking the class such questions as, "In which place does this event go?" "What happened next?" "What happened first?" "Then what happened?" "What happened before . . . ?" "What happened after . . . ?" "What happened last?" "When did this happen compared to that?" And so on.

By the time the class was finished with this activity, they had constructed a human time line, and before very many days, they would be ready to try using time lines to hypothesize cause and effect. Sherilyn was on a roll!

Please note that if Maxine had had an interdisciplinary plan and had identified as an art objective that the students were to draw and color a windy day, that would have been fine after they had constructed their time line. Our objection to Maxine's lesson is that she did not match her instructional activities to her instructional objective.

Don't be a Maxine! Do be a Sherilyn!

Matching Assessments to Objectives

Assessment! In special education circles, a well-known maxim is: If you ain't tested it, you ain't taught it! Assessment is the only way we know whether or not our teaching has been effective.

The key to organizing for assessment is curriculum based assessment, or CBA. To use CBA, take the short-term objective: If students can perform the short-term objective, they've passed the assessment. If students can't perform the short-term objective, they've failed the assessment. It's as simple as that.

Eddie and Chadd were interns at the sixth grade level. They both had the following objective: The student identifies the purposes of different types of texts (to express, to entertain, to inform, to influence). Eddie's assessment consisted of eight short readings. At the end of each reading, the student was to answer a multiple choice question: Which of the following was the purpose of this reading? (a) to express; (b) to entertain; (c) to inform; (d) to influence. He had a great assessment! His assessment matched his objective.

In contrast to Eddie's, Chadd's assessment didn't match the objective. First, he had a series of questions about the plot and characters of a short story the students had read. Then he asked what must be included in a newspaper-type report. He wrote a wonderful assessment of something, but it didn't assess his objective at all!

Ron Finley, a Civil Service employee who works for the Department of Defense in the training area, told us that the training in the United States military begins with an assessment. The trainers ask, "What does this student need to be able to do?" The answer may be, "Break down this engine and put it back together again." The instructors make the assessment first, before they identify objectives. From the assessment, the instructors identify clusters of behaviors, and those become the behavioral objectives. This is sometimes known as backwards planning; it ensures that the assessment matches the objectives, something that public school teachers sometimes fail to do.

For school teachers, the key to organizing for assessment is CBA: Write your assessment to measure whether or not the students can perform the objective.

Personalizing Your Lesson Plan Forms

First grade teacher Sylvia Broussard told us, "Develop your own form, which can be photocopied each week. Enter as much of your repeated routine as possible on your lesson plans so you are not writing the same thing over and over. I also leave a space for enrichment and reteach. As the lesson is taught or papers are corrected, I note students' needs in these two areas. I jot down what is needed to meet their individual needs for the next day right on the lesson plan."

Bully idea!

Summary

In this section, we have discussed how to organize for good planning. Examine the following checklist and check off the items about which you feel confident. Reread any about which you need to continue thinking.

- ☐ Interdisciplinary lesson plans
- ☐ Matching goals to objectives to objectives to activities
- ☐ Matching assessments to objectives
- ☐ Personalizing your lesson plan forms

THE TEACHING ACT

In the last section, we discussed ways of organizing your lesson planning. In this section, we will discuss some ways of organizing the teaching act itself.

Specifically, we will cover:

- ☐ Using graphic organizers
- ☐ Using checklists
- ☐ Emphasizing important points
- ☐ Selecting students systematically
- ☐ Using talking beanbags
- ☐ The learning stage/personnel/activity chart
- ☐ Ensuring that all students know the answer
- ☐ "Each one teach one"

Using Graphic Organizers

Graphic organizers are an excellent way to open and close a lesson. A number of graphic organizers may meet your needs for any specific lesson.

Web Graphic Organizers

The majority of Millie's interns (about 8:1) prefer her to use a web organizer when she teaches. She starts the lesson by asking the students what they know about a topic. The students tell her, and she webs that material. After the lesson, she adds to the web the new material that the students have learned. If she is teaching a unit, she makes the graphic organizer on butcher paper and keeps it to start and end each day's lesson. If the lesson won't go beyond one day, she uses the chalkboard.

Figure 7.4 gives an example of a web from one of Fr. Francis Xavier's classes that was starting the lighthouse unit.

The advantage of the web type of organizer is that the teacher can include every student's input. The disadvantage is that it is difficult to conceptualize the knowledge tree in this form. Contrasting the web to the concept hierarchy organizer shows that it is generally more simple to conceptualize benefits and drawbacks of each method.



Figure 7.4. Web Graphic Organizer of Students' Knowledge of Lighthouses

Concept Hierarchies as Graphic Organizers

In contrast to the majority of her students, Millie and the minority of her students prefer a concept hierarchy type of graphic organizer. The advantage of this type of organizer is that it better allows students to see how information fits in the tree of knowledge (Figure 7.5).

The disadvantage of this type of organizer is that you may get into trouble if you start the lesson with the organizer by asking students what they already know about the topic. The things that they tell you may not fit very well into your hierarchy.

If you use this type of organizer, you will probably want to put it up on the wall on butcher paper when you first begin a unit. Then each time you teach a piece of the concept over the course of the unit, color in that box at the end of the lesson to show how what the students learned fits into the big picture, as Figure 7.6 shows. You probably will not want to try to incorporate what the children say they know about the topic into the hierarchy. Instead, you can ask the children what they know, make a web on the chalkboard, and keep the hierarchy separate from the web.

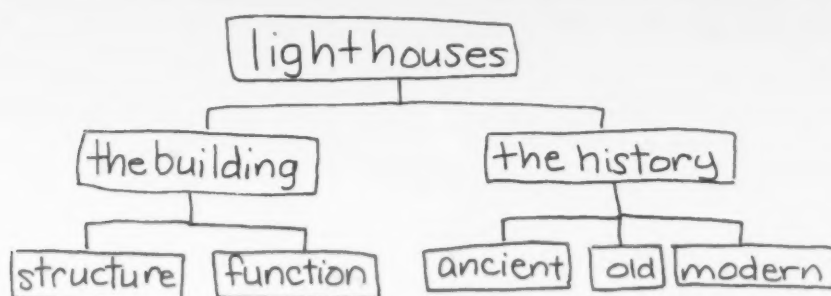


Figure 7.5. Concept Hierarchy Graphic Organizer of Lighthouses

KWL Charts as Graphic Organizers

KWL, or what do you Know, what do you Want to know, and what did you Learn, charts are a type of graphic organizer. One of the strengths of this type of organizer is that the students identify what they want to learn about the topic (which may or may not be what you intend to teach them!). A problem, however, is that KWL charts seem to be weaker on helping students construct a graphic picture of the concept. Each type of graphic organizer has its assets and liabilities. Here's a KWL chart for the lighthouse unit (Figure 7.6).

Using Checklists

Ms. Herrera likes to use checklists to open and close a class or a unit. One benefit of this strategy is that it reminds you to include all the steps in the lesson that you planned to include. Without a checklist, Ms. Herrera finds that she often forgets to include lesson activities! By using a checklist, she can make certain to include all the parts of the lesson.

You can use checklists in two ways: publicly or privately. Using the checklist publicly means to write it on the chalkboard, overhead, butcher paper, or class computer monitor. The students will then know exactly what they will be doing in the lesson. As you complete each part of the lesson, check it off. Then at the end of the lesson, quickly review each item on the checklist. One advantage of the public checklist is that the students will perceive you as very organized if you post the list and check off each item.

Using the checklist privately simply means that your checklist is strictly for your use, so it isn't displayed where the students can see it. The private

<i>K</i>	<i>W</i>	<i>L</i>
for safety on shore all different some are old show the right way	How do they work What happens in a hurricane? Why are they all different? How old are they?	

Figure 7.6. KWL Chart of Lighthouses

checklist simply serves to help you make certain not to forget part of the lesson.

Emphasizing Important Points

Many children have difficulty discriminating important points from unimportant. Students who have disabilities often find determining what is important from what is not important to be very challenging. Teach your students that the following behaviors on your part mean that something is crucial in a lesson: (a) you repeat it verbatim three times; (b) you say, "This is very important. Remember it"; (c) you have them repeat it back to you verbatim multiple times as a chorus; and (d) you have them repeat it to their seatmates, the ceiling, the floor, Ms. Pencil, Mr. Desk, and any other available person or object.

Even as college professors, John and Millie find that their students often have trouble discriminating between what is of crucial importance and what is of lesser import. Explicitly teaching students these strategies for knowing what is important will increase their achievement.

Selecting Students Systematically

Research shows that we tend to call on the same students over and over. After all, it's hard to ask someone who often doesn't know the correct answer when you know that Consuela Griego does know the right answer. We have to work hard to make ourselves call on all students equitably.

A wonderful idea that we received from a teacher helps us to select students systematically without going down the rows or using our grade-book to call them in alphabetical order.

Poker Chips

Write each student's name on a poker chip. Drop all the chips in a five-pound coffee can. Draw a name and call on that person. Drop the chip back in the can so that person won't know whether or not he needs to stay alert; his name might be called again!

Clothespins

When it is more important to be certain that every person gets called on rather than that every person has an equal chance to be called on each time, use clothespins. Write each student's name on a pin. Drop them into the coffee can. Draw out a pin and call the name. Then clip the used pin to the side of the can. Everyone gets a turn.

Using Talking Beanbags

Teacher Pat Page gave us great advice. She said that when you have students who have a hard time remembering to raise their hands, you should use talking beanbags. The rule is that no one may talk unless holding a beanbag. The teacher keeps one beanbag in order to be able to talk at will. The second beanbag is tossed to the student who is to speak next. Pat says that whenever someone starts to blurt something out, she holds up her beanbag as a nonverbal cue for the student to hold his tongue. She tells us, "You would not believe how many people get interested in class when the beanbags are flying out and flying around the room." By using beanbags, Pat doesn't have to keep telling the kids to raise their hands.

*The Learning Stage/
Personnel/Activity Chart*

With more and more individual and small group instruction required in today's schools, knowing how to teach multiple students multiple things at one time is a necessity. By taking the learning stages and thinking about what activities are appropriate for each and what personnel can be involved in each, the chart in Figure 7.7 emerges to help you organize your classroom.

Note that we argue that interacting with the teacher is not necessary during fluency/proficiency instruction or during maintenance activities. We do recommend the teacher direct adaptation level activities, because if a skill/knowledge is not to be used or is to be altered in some important way, we think you should be the purveyor of that information, or, if you are using Cooperative Learning activities, that you monitor very closely.

	Stage of Learning	Activity	Personnel
↑ 5 4 3 2 1	Adaptation	Direct Instruction	Teacher
		Cooperative Learning Activities	Cooperative Learning Groups
	Generalization/Transfer	Cooperative Learning Activities	Teacher Aide Capable Volunteer Cooperative Learning Groups
		Games	Peers
	Maintenance	Group Projects	Cooperative Learning Groups
		Individual Projects	
		Computer Aided Instruction	
	Fluency/Proficiency	Cooperative Learning Activities	Cooperative Learning Groups
		Computer Aided Instruction	
	Acquisition	Cooperative Learning Activities	Cooperative Learning Groups
		Inductive Technique Models	Teacher
		Direct Instruction Models	Teacher

Figure 7.7. Activities and Personnel Optimal for Stage of Learning

Your direction is also required at the acquisition level, although again, close monitoring of Cooperative Learning activities is advised. However, you shouldn't have to involve yourself much with students who are engaged in fluency/proficiency or maintenance activities. You don't even have to monitor closely. Those groups can take care of themselves.

You will notice that we use Cooperative Learning extensively. Cooperative Learning is one of the best organizational tools in existence. Because the students are teaching and giving feedback to each other, often in a ratio of 1:1, but never in a ratio more than 3:1, behavior problems are minimized. That brings us to the next section: ensuring that every student knows the answer.

Ensuring That Every Student Knows the Answer

Cooperative Learning is the key to ensuring that every student knows the answer. You're probably either enthusiastically nodding your head, or you're rolling your eyes and saying, "Yeah. Right." If you are among the head-nodder group, hooray for you! You have probably received instruction in Cooperative Learning. If you're one of the eye rollers, you simply have not been taught how to conduct Cooperative Learning Lessons.

The eye rollers often say this: "I've tried Cooperative Learning. One kid ends up doing all the work, and the others are slackers who get a good grade because of the kid who did the work." That statement alone tells us that you weren't doing Cooperative Learning. You were doing group work. It isn't the same thing.

The reason that we knew from one sentence that you weren't doing Cooperative Learning is that group grades are NEVER given in Cooperative Learning. Group rewards are given, such as 5 minutes free time, but grades are never given to a group. One of the hallmarks of Cooperative Learning is Individual Accountability. If individual accountability isn't present, you've got group work, not Cooperative Learning.

We are going to teach you one Cooperative Learning structure from Dr. Spencer Kagan's book, *Cooperative Learning*. Try it. You'll find you want to know all the dozens of structures in his book. You can purchase the book by calling 1-800-Wee Co-op. We can't think of a more powerful investment.

The structure we are going to teach you is called Numbered Heads Together. In this structure you do the following: First, assign students to heterogeneous groups of four. Assign a number to each group, starting with Group #1. Next, have the students number off within their groups, so that each group has a Person #1, a #2, a #3, and a #4.

Next, using material to which the students have been exposed (say, a chapter in their social studies book), get ready to ask the students a question, which you will pose in problem form by saying, "Make sure that everyone in your group can tell me . . ."

Pose the problem, such as "Make sure that everyone in your group can tell me what the Executive Branch of government does." Then say, "When everyone in your group can tell me the answer, raise your hand." Have the students work together to find the answer and make certain that all of them know it. (Some students call this structure "Butts Up" because that's the position they tend to assume when they're all talking and working to decide on the answer.)

When all hands in the class are raised, roll a die or spin a spinner to determine a person number, for example, #3. All others lower hands. Then roll or spin again to decide a group, for example, #5. That person, #3 in group #5, answers the question.

No grades are given for Numbered Heads Together. It's simply a learning and study strategy. The grades would come from individual quizzes over the material at the end of the period, or at a later time. Individual accountability is key.

If you choose to, you could give group or class rewards of something such as one minute free time for each five questions answered correctly by the class. But don't give group grades under any circumstances.

Kids love it! Our college students love it! We love it!

You'll love it, too.

You will also want to explore David Johnson and Robert Johnson's books on Cooperative Learning, such as *Cooperation and Competition: Theory and Research* (1989) and Robert Slavin's books, such as *Cooperative Learning: Theory, Research, and Practice* (1995). These are excellent resources that every professional teacher should have.

"Each One Teach One"

A good way to teach complex skills, such as using the computer, is by using an "each one teach one" approach. Sylvia Broussard gave us an example of how she uses this strategy with her first graders: "I introduce new computer skills by focusing on teaching two students until they become proficient. Then they each teach another student, and so on, until most of the students learn the skill. These students can help solve many problems and the students are not dependent solely on the teacher to help them."

Summary

In this section, we have discussed ways to organize your teaching more efficiently. We stressed the importance of using Cooperative Learning to assist you in organizing your teaching. We also covered the following items. Check off those you understand. Reread any about which you are uncertain.

- ☐ Using graphic organizers
- ☐ Using checklists
- ☐ Emphasizing important points
- ☐ Selecting students systematically
- ☐ Using talking beanbags
- ☐ The learning stage/personnel/activity chart
- ☐ Ensuring that all students know the answer
- ☐ "Each one teach one"

IMPROVING STANDARDIZED TESTING

In the last section, we discussed ways that you can organize the teaching act more effectively. In this section, we will discuss one way that you can organize your teaching to improve your students' standardized test scores.

- ☐ Weekly practice tests

Weekly Practice Tests

Teachers tell us that their state-mandated standardized testing disrupts the life of their classrooms for the month that precedes the testing and that their students know more than the tests reveal. We talked to organized teachers about how they handle this problem. We consistently heard the same answer.

Organized teachers don't wait until the month before the state-mandated assessments to prepare for them. They begin the first month of school. Here's what they do.

Starting the first month, they set aside half an hour to an hour one afternoon a week. They give students timed practice assessments of the material that they've covered that week that is of the type that will appear on the state tests. They include all of the types of formats of questions that

are used on their state tests. The students become accustomed to the format of the questions, filling in bubble sheets, and taking timed tests.

The assessments don't count for a grade. The students understand that they are taking the practice assessments in order to prepare for the state test. After the assessments, the students correct their own papers.

These teachers are organizing their teaching so that their students will excel on the state tests by beginning early in the year and helping the students overcome the anxiety that is usually associated with such tests.

Summary

In this section, we have discussed one way to organize your teaching in order to help your students improve their standardized test scores. Specifically, we discussed the following:

- ☐ Weekly practice tests

RECOMMENDED READING

Johnson, D., & Johnson, R. (1989). *Cooperation and competition: Theory and research*. Edina, MN: Interaction Books.

Joyce, B., & Weil, M. (1986). *Models of teaching* (3rd ed.). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Kagan, S. (1994). *Cooperative learning*. USA: Resources for Teachers. (Available by calling 1-800-Wee Co-op)

Slavin, R. (1995). *Cooperative learning: Theory, research, and practice*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

8

HELPING STUDENTS LEARN TO ORGANIZE THEMSELVES

A teacher who complains of her disorganization told us recently, "I know we're all responsible for our own behavior, but I can't help but wish that someone had taught me to organize myself when I was a child. Mom, my teachers . . . *someone* should have helped me. I remember my second grade teacher criticizing me in front of the class about having the messiest desk in the room. And my desk was awful, I'll admit it. I remember my face feeling hot, and wanting to hide as the other kids stared at me with this haughty look. I played sick the next day so I wouldn't have to face everyone.

"In retrospect, I blame my second grade teacher for not teaching me how to organize myself, instead of simply criticizing me for not being organized. Since she saw the problem, she should have helped me with it.

"Same with my mom. Don't get me wrong, I adore her, but she only criticized me for my messiness and disorganization. Why didn't she teach me HOW to organize my things and myself?"

Because our emphasis as teachers is less and less on rote memorization and more and more on teaching skills that will help students be successful in the real world, we must teach kids to organize themselves. Being organized is a crucial skill for success. Regardless of how smart and creative students are as adults, if they miss crucial appointments, fail to meet deadlines, and can't produce quality products because of their disorganization, they'll never be successful. Therefore, in this chapter, we will address a few ideas that will help you help your students organize themselves.

MATERIALS

In the last chapter, we discussed organizing your teaching. In this section, we will discuss helping students learn to organize their materials and papers. We will discuss:

- ☐ Pencil exchange
- ☐ Organizer boxes
- ☐ Three-ring notebooks
- ☐ Dejunking

Pencil Exchange

Sylvia Broussard told us that the inordinate amount of time that first graders spend on pencil sharpening led her to develop the following organizational strategy: All students are to have two sharpened pencils ready at the beginning of school. If they break a pencil or it becomes too dull, it's exchanged for a sharpened pencil that the teacher keeps in a mug on her desk. The helpers sharpen the pencils in the mug at noon and at the end of the day. A little organizational problem solved!

Organizer Boxes

We talked about the joys of organizer boxes in our chapter on organizing nonprint teaching materials. We think that all children in self-contained classrooms should have organizer boxes in their desks. Students who are in departmentalized classes should have organizer boxes in their backpacks. The old cigar boxes were works of art, but everything in them got mixed up with everything else. For the same reason, the new plastic school boxes are less useful than the organizer boxes. Organizer boxes are a crucial tool for kids to begin to organize themselves more effectively.

Three-Ring Notebooks

In order for your students to be able to take advantage of three-ring notebooks, you have to help them by holepunching all papers that you give them! That's important enough to say again! **HOLEPUNCH ALL PAPERS YOU GIVE STUDENTS!!!**

For those papers that for some reason you haven't holepunched, have three or four good quality holepunchers distributed throughout the room

for student use. Insist that students have all papers in their desks filed in a three-ring notebook, and that none be floating about the desk.

Because little kids hate to throw away their papers, insist that they take home the papers that you return each day. Explicitly state that by taking the papers home daily, they are keeping their desks well organized.

You can choose not to hand the papers out until the end of the day. That solves the problem of disorganization from papers. But by handing the papers out earlier in the day, you can instruct the students to put their papers in their three-ring notebook, and begin teaching them the habit of organizing themselves in this way. We like the idea of taking this proactive role in teaching students to organize themselves.

Dejunking

In addition to insisting that students take papers home every day, teach them to dejunk their desks regularly. Help kids learn to identify junk using Don Aslett's definitions. Then teach them to wean themselves from desk junk using the techniques we discussed in Chapter 5.

You may wish to have a dejunking day periodically in which you distribute small paper bags to substitute for weaning boxes. Kids can put ambivalent items in the bags, write their names on the outside, and staple the bags shut. Then you can take up the bags and announce that any unclaimed bags will be trashed at the end of the 2-week period. Helping kids learn to dejunk is a favor that will last them a lifetime!

Summary

In this section, we have discussed ways of helping students learn to organize objects. Specifically, we have discussed the following:

- ☐ Pencil exchange
- ☐ Organizer boxes
- ☐ Three-ring notebooks
- ☐ Dejunking

TIME AND MEMORY

In the last section, we discussed how to help kids learn to organize their materials. Here we will discuss two ideas that will help kids learn to organize time and memory.

- ☐ Student checklists
- ☐ Student day planners

Student Checklists

A second grade teacher told us, "It made me crazy when my own child would come home at the end of the day and I asked him what he learned that day. He always shrugged his shoulders and said, 'Nothing.'"

"I knew he'd learned lots of things, but try as he might, he didn't seem to remember what any of those things were. When I went back to college and became a teacher, I didn't want my students to go home and tell their parents that they hadn't learned anything in my class each day, so I devised a plan.

"At the end of each day, I discussed with the kids specific things we'd learned. Then we put those things in order on the board and made a checklist. The kids took the checklist home and checked off each item as they told their folks about it.

"By this strategy, I was able to accomplish several things. First, I was able to incorporate practice on sequencing such as 'What did we learn first? Second? Third?' I was also able to use the list as an authentic literacy activity. Then, I was able to make sure that when their parents asked them what they'd learned that day, nobody would say, 'Nothing!'"

We would argue that this world-class teacher was also teaching her kids how to organize themselves by using checklists!

Several teachers told us that they list all the subjects in the upper lefthand corner of the board each day. Then as the class finishes each subject, the teacher checks it off. This would be a good example of modeling the use of a checklist for the students. Wouldn't it be a great idea to have kids attach small checklists to the upper lefthand corner of their desks and check off each subject as they finished it? What a great way to teach the skill of using checklists! The potential for teaching kids to use checklists is endless.

Student Day Planners

The idea of having students carry day planners was a new one for us. We first learned about this strategy when Greg Gibson, one of our graduate students in educational leadership, told us about instituting mandatory student day planners in his high school. He wanted to conduct his master's degree research on the planners, and we were intrigued. He surveyed all the students in his high school and had great results.

Greg found that some of his students already used day planners on their own. However, after requiring day planners (provided by the school), a significant percentage of his students said that they have better grades now than they did before they used the day planners. Students also reported that the day planners help them keep up with extracurricular activities and commitments.

As far as we know, no one is researching the use of day planners with younger children, but we think it is a grand idea. They could be made inexpensively on the computer and duplicated for children who could carry them in three-ring notebooks. Teachers at different grade levels could tailor make the day planners at increasing levels of sophistication as their students increased their organizational skills.

Summary

In this section, we have discussed ways to help students learn to organize their time and memory. Specifically, we have discussed the following:

- ☐ Student checklists
- ☐ Student day planners

LEARNING BEHAVIOR

In the last section, we discussed how to help kids organize their materials, memory, and time. A more abstract notion is to teach them to organize their learning behavior. This section will briefly discuss a way to approach helping students to organize their own learning behavior.

- ☐ Choice Theory

Choice Theory

As teachers become more organized, they tell us that it feels good finally to start having some control over their lives. Adults have no difficulty admitting they need to have some control over their lives, usually the more the better. In addition to feeling good, they find themselves accomplishing more, seeming more professional, and teaching more effectively. But those same teachers may overlook similar needs in their students.

Students who have no control over their classroom environment are likely to react in undesirable ways. Even capable students may withdraw and

do as little as possible. Some bright students become rebellious disciplinary problems. The major work in this field was conducted by William Glasser, M.D. After years of studying low achievers, Dr. Glasser found that when problem students are given some control over their learning, they often begin to see school as a rewarding place, start to accomplish more, find that they are learning, and begin to feel good about themselves. These improvements result in better academic achievement and fewer discipline problems, two outcomes dear to a teacher's heart.

But if those dear teachers can accomplish all that, why isn't every teacher giving more control to students? The answer is that extending more control to students is not easy. It takes more organization and requires more creativity.

Creativity is necessary to find things over which students can exert control without becoming monsters. This is a realistic concern, since some students are immature and can mishandle even the best idea, turning it into a problem instead of a help. Since most teachers' two main goals are to increase achievement and decrease discipline problems, let's address each.

Achievement increases when more than one way of learning is available, and the student can select the way that best fits her learning style or preference. The challenge for the teacher is to create alternate ways to learn. For example, some visually oriented students might learn $3 \times 4 = 12$ by just reading it in an arithmetic book. For kinesthetically oriented students, this concept will not be understood until they arrange three sets of four (and four sets of three) paper clips on their desks and repeatedly count the total. A musically oriented student might learn it best by working it into a song or a rap. Howard Gardner and David Lazear are two authors who help us understand at least seven of the different learning styles.

Don't throw this book! We're not saying that every good teacher should have seven different learning activities ready for every concept. We are recommending that a couple of ways to do some things will have a noticeable impact when your students can elect which they will do. Teachers who develop alternates for a few concepts quickly find themselves generating options for other lessons, too. Your students are likely to suggest even more alternatives. The second time you teach a course you easily add to the variety of learning options you used the first time. Once your creativity is tickled, watch out!

Watching for opportunities for multiple learning options, a disorganized teacher quickly panics and gives up. This is why it is so important to become as organized as possible: Effective teachers will increasingly employ choices for their students. And offering students these choices will teach them to begin organizing their own learning behavior.

Summary

In this section, we have discussed one way to teach students to organize their own learning behavior. Try incorporating choice theory as a device for helping students learn to organize their own learning behavior.

☐ Choice Theory

RECOMMENDED READING

- Gardner, H. (1983). *Frames of mind: The theory of multiple intelligences*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Gardner, H. (1991). *The unschooled mind: How children think, and how schools should teach*. New York: Basic Books.
- Gardner, H. (1993). *Multiple intelligences: The theory in practice*. New York: Basic Books.
- Glasser, W. (1986). *Control theory in the classroom*. New York: Perennial Library.
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- Lazear, D. (1991). *Seven ways of knowing: Teaching for multiple intelligences*. Arlington Heights, IL: IRI/Skylight Training and Publishing.

9

TEACHING STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

First-year teachers (and many experienced teachers) tell us that the biggest problem that they have is working with students who have behavioral and learning problems. Many teachers feel poorly equipped to work with students who have challenges. This chapter will tell you how to organize your teaching to help remediate children who are challenged. You'll be surprised to find how effective these organizational strategies are, even for students without disabilities!

ESTABLISHING THE BEHAVIORAL ENVIRONMENT

In the last chapter, we discussed how to help students organize themselves. In this section, we will outline ways to organize the behavioral environment for students who have behavior problems. Specifically, we will examine:

- ☐ The keys to working with students who have problems
- ☐ Creating structure for students who have learning problems
- ☐ Systematically teaching social skills
- ☐ Ensuring transfer of skills

The Keys to Working With Students Who Have Problems

There are two keys to working with students who have problems: (a) explicitness and (b) repetition. That's a pretty simple answer for a big problem, but you will find that explicitness and repetition are powerful tools.

Explicitness

Special needs students don't learn inductively. For example, Antonio, who is not a special needs student, came to class 5 minutes late from recess. When Antonio entered the classroom, his teacher said, "You are to report to detention hall after school for being late to class." Antonio never came in late from recess again. He inductively learned that if he were ever late to class again, he would have to go to detention.

In contrast, Bobby, a special needs student, came in 5 minutes late from recess. When Bobby entered the classroom, his teacher said, "You are to report to detention hall after school for being late to class." Bobby was late to class again later in the week. Bobby had not learned inductively that he would have to go to detention if he were late for class again.

Does that sound confusing? To those of us who learn inductively it is confusing, but to a person who doesn't learn inductively, it makes perfect sense. Bobby only learned that he had to go to detention on that particular day because he was late to class. He did not infer that he would have to go to detention every time he was late for class. He did not even infer that he would have to go to detention *ever again* for being late for class. Bobby does not have the ability to connect cause and effect. That's an almost universal problem for students who have problems. Bobby will be late for class again and again; his teacher will send him to detention again and again; he will never connect the two events without explicit teaching.

By explicit teaching, we mean that you must tell Bobby explicitly, "Bobby, you were late to class. Because you were late to class, you have to go to detention. Every time you are late to class, you will have to go to detention. The next time you are late, you will have to go to detention. The time after next that you are late, you will have to go to detention. Being late causes you to have to go to detention. Going to detention is the effect, or result, of your being late to class. The two events are connected to each other as surely as if there were a rope tying them together."

The only way that Bobby will ever "get it" is by being told explicitly over and over what the consequences of his behaviors are.

Repetition

Closely aligned to explicit teaching is repetition. Researchers tell us that regular children must be exposed to something many times (some say 40 times) before they learn it. Children who have special needs may require repetition four thousand times before they learn it! Unless we expose students who have special needs to important information over and over and over and over and over, they aren't going to learn it. If they could learn in a typical number of repetitions, they wouldn't be students who had problems; they would be typical students. They require endless repetition.

One of the ways that we can ensure adequate repetition is by using a HyperCard™ program to create drill and practice programs for our special needs students. The computer never tires or gets cranky when it has to give corrective feedback for the five hundredth time. Computer aided instruction is invaluable in working with students who have special needs.

Creating Structure for Students Who Have Problems

When Millie was an undergraduate in special education, her professors told her repeatedly, "Structure, structure, structure." She mastered the idea. But when she took her first teaching job (junior high school behavior disorders), she quickly realized, "My professors told me to create structure, but they didn't tell me how! What is structure? I can't create it if I don't know what it involves!"

After a trek through the research and many years of trial and error, Millie developed what she calls the 4Rs of Structure: rules, responsibilities, routines, and rituals (Figure 9.1). We'll address each in turn.

Rules

Millie defines *rules* as *guidelines that govern our behavior toward others*. *Don't hurt other people's property* is a rule because it governs one's behavior toward others. *Don't hurt other people's bodies or their feelings* is a rule, because it governs one's behavior toward others.

You probably noticed that these rules were not stated positively in the way that we were all taught in our elementary education classes. That is because special needs students don't learn inductively. If we were to instead use the rule: *Respect others*, our special needs students wouldn't get it. Case in point:

Monty was a high school student who had a behavior disorder. He was mainstreamed for several classes, including sophomore English. His English

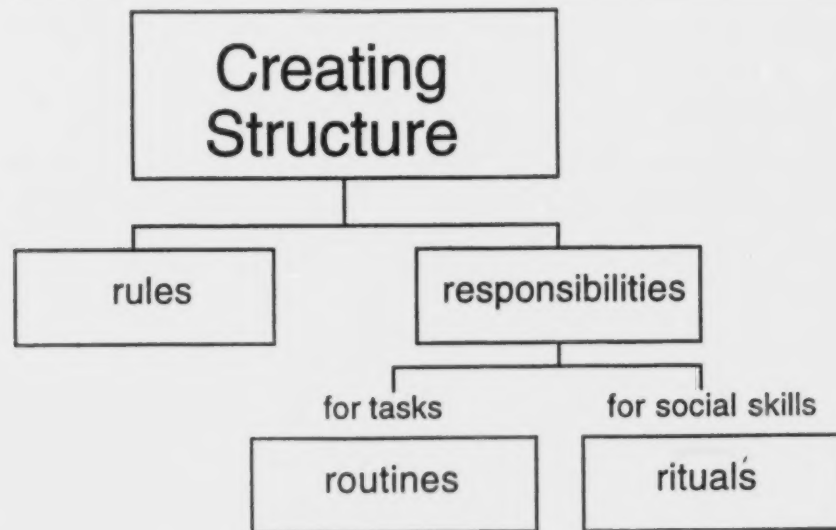


Figure 9.1. The 4Rs of Structure

teacher, Coach, contacted Millie about his disruptive behavior in class. Millie arranged to come the next day and conduct an antecedent-behavior-consequence observation.

Millie entered the class during break the following day. Monty entered and interacted with the other students in an appropriate, friendly, teenage manner. When Coach asked the students to quiet down and listen to their instructions, Monty did so. When Coach was finished giving the instructions and was ready for the students to begin working independently on their assignments, he said, "Get to work and don't disturb others."

In about one minute, Monty began talking to the two girls by whom he was sitting. Then they all started laughing. Coach sent Monty out of the room.

Millie interviewed Monty back in the special ed room. "Why did you disturb the girls after Coach had just told you not to?" she asked.

Monty looked offended. "I didn't disturb anyone," he objected. "I was only telling them a joke!"

If even a negatively phrased direction such as "Don't disturb" wasn't effective in letting Monty know what the rules were, you can be certain that he wouldn't have understood something as vague to him as "Respect others."

When we're teaching rules to students with problems, we have to start with the most basic list of "Don'ts" we can. "Don't touch anyone." "Don't touch anyone else's belongings." "Don't say rude or mean things to anyone." "Don't tease anyone." Those are the kinds of very basic rules with which we must start. After the child has mastered those four rules, we can then teach him explicitly that we are subsuming those rules under the rule: "Respect others." Then when a rule infraction occurs, we say, "You didn't respect others. You know that not touching anyone else's belongings is part of the 'respect others' rule. You touched someone else's belongings, so you broke the 'respect others' rule."

When we want to teach a rule to our student who has problems, we write down the rule, talk with him about the rule, demonstrate the rule, and then have him practice it over and over (see the section on "Systematically Teaching Social Skills"). For example, in the case of "Don't touch anyone," demonstrate the rule by role-playing and saying out loud what your thoughts would be, such as: "It sure is boring sitting here. Monty's sitting next to me. It would be fun to reach over and poke him on the arm. But that's against one of the rules. One of the rules is 'Don't touch anyone,' so if I touch Monty, I'll be breaking the rule. I better not touch him. I guess I'll draw a picture instead."

Don't work on too many rules at once with the student who has special needs. Three rules at a time would be the maximum, and you may have students who can work on only one rule at a time. And remember, the rules must be posted where the student with special needs can see them at all times.

Responsibilities

In contrast to rules, Millie defines responsibilities as "Tasks I gotta do." She doesn't define responsibilities as being related to behavior toward others, since that is the definition of a rule, although sometimes the two may overlap. For example, putting the ice cream back in the freezer is a task, but it could also be a rule, because the next person will be affected if we leave it on the counter. She has never had a student with special needs who had problems understanding that occasionally a rule and a responsibility overlap.

Routines

Routines and responsibilities are intimately entwined. Routines are the little steps required in carrying out a responsibility. The routine for doing a

responsibility in Ms. Grant's social studies class may be quite different from doing the same responsibility in Mr. Noland's math class. For example, getting ready for class in Ms. Grant's class may require sitting down with a pencil and journal and writing an entry about the morning news. Getting ready for class in Mr. Noland's class may involve sharpening your pencil, getting out your book, paper, and calculator, and visiting quietly with your neighbor until Mr. Noland steps up to the chalkboard.

Like rules, responsibilities should be posted, discussed, modeled, and practiced. Millie posted the responsibility that she was teaching along with those that had been taught, then had her students practice it; for example, coming into the building, entering the classroom, going to the lockers, getting out a pencil and paper, going to the desk, sitting down, and beginning to work on the sponge activity on the board. Her students practiced and practiced it until everyone had it down pat. When all the students except a couple had mastered the responsibility, then only those who still needed help continued practicing for as many days as necessary.

Rituals

Rituals are to social behaviors what routines are to tasks. A big problem for teachers of students who have behavior problems is those students' rituals, or lack thereof. Here are some examples of social behaviors for which students may need to be taught rituals: taking correction from a teacher, apologizing, asking a question, making a request, using appropriate eye contact, disagreeing, and so on. Don't assume that because a student does something that you consider rude, he intended to be rude.

Millie's best example had to do with a student in first grade who passed gas in class in a loud and distracting manner. She thought he was being rude. What she discovered was that he didn't know it was considered rude behavior. In his family, passing gas was considered amusing and was met with comments of manly approval. He simply did not know that a different ritual existed for passing gas in school. He wanted to please his teacher, and responded more quickly than she had expected to learning the new ritual.

Even very young children can understand that certain rituals are required at school that are different from those required at home. If the child is having trouble understanding this concept, ask him, "Do you play football?" "Do you play basketball?" "Are the rules the same?" "Well, the 'rules' for burping at school are different from your mom's 'rules' for burping at home. You have to play by the school 'rules' when you are at school."

Teaching rituals is exactly like teaching routines: Write them down, talk about them, model them, and have the child practice them.

Systematically Teaching Social Skills

When you need to teach a social skill, you will generally detect the child's deficiency based upon her behavior in your classroom; however, if you become impatient with just putting out fires, you need a good resource for a social skills curriculum. We suggest Arnold P. Goldstein's *Prepare Curriculum*, a hierarchy of 60 skills that every student should master. This curriculum would be ideal for guiding your school to implement a comprehensive social skills training program from kindergarten through junior high. You will find it listed in the recommended reading list at the end of this chapter.

The information that we will now discuss applies to teaching both routines and rituals. It is imperative that you follow this strategy; the research on teaching social skills has dismal results. We think that has occurred because of the ways in which social skills instruction has been approached. Because the special education research says that explicitness and repetition are the keys to teaching learners with special needs, and because direct instruction and cognitive behavior modification, two strategies that use explicitness and repetition, have research support, we suggest that teaching social skills using those strategies should be effective.

As we said earlier, it is essential to write out the steps to the ritual/routine, talk about them, model them, and then have the student practice, practice, practice.

Here are the steps in detail:

1. Write down the steps and post them.
2. Talk to the student about the need for learning this new way of doing things.
3. Get the student to commit to learning the strategy.
4. Model the strategy, talking yourself through each step aloud as you go.
5. Have the student practice the strategy while you talk him through each step. Do this until he has demonstrated mastery at least 10 times.
6. Have the student practice the strategy as he talks himself through each step aloud. Do this until he has demonstrated mastery at least 10 times.
7. Have the student practice the strategy as he whispers himself through each step. Do this until he has demonstrated mastery at least 10 times.
8. Have the student practice the strategy as he subvocalizes himself through each step. Continue until the strategy becomes automatic.

In the case of both routines and rituals, the practices will probably have to be conducted through role play. For example, the student role-plays walking into the classroom and getting ready for class or role-plays making a request of the teacher. When the practice is of a ritual (social skill), then after the student becomes proficient at the ritual within your classroom (*analog practice* is the term for practice in such a lab situation), then you will want him to practice the skill in a real-life situation outside the classroom (*in vivo practice* is the term for real-life practice).

Be sure to reinforce the student each time his practice is correct. When he uses the skill in real-life situations, he should receive natural reinforcement from the person with whom he uses the skill. By natural reinforcement, we mean that if his skill is making a request, compliance with the request is his natural reinforcement.

The system used for systematic social skill instruction is very nearly the same as that used for academic strategy instruction, which we'll cover in the next chapter in the section titled "Cognitive Behavior Modification."

Ensuring Transfer of Social Skills

You can't assume transfer of social skills from your lab situation to the real world. That's why *in vivo practice* is so important. However, you can't even assume that a social skill learned correctly in one *in vivo* situation will transfer to another *in vivo* situation. That's because the student does not learn inductively, so he can't infer, "Because I learned that I should say please and thank you when making a request of the music teacher, I should use that same skill when making a request of the recess aide, the ladies in the cafeteria, and the principal."

The way we deal with this transference problem is by MEMC, or using *multiple exemplars in multiple contexts*. It takes a long time to teach a student with disabilities to transfer a skill (*transferring* is to a skill what *generalization* is to a *concept*), because he must practice the skill in all of the contexts in which you can imagine he will need to use it, but it's worth the investment in terms of an organizational strategy; it will save you time and effort in the long run.

Summary

In this section, we have discussed organizing the behavioral environment for the student who has learning problems. Specifically, we have examined the following items. Check off each item about which you are clear. Reread any about which you are uncertain.

- ☐ The keys to working with students who have problems
- ☐ Creating structure for students who have learning problems
- ☐ Systematically teaching social skills
- ☐ Ensuring transfer of skills

ORGANIZING THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

In the last section, we discussed organizing the behavioral environment for the student who has learning problems. In this section, we will discuss organizing the learning environment. Specifically, we will discuss:

- ☐ The keys to teaching students who have problems
- ☐ Direct Instruction
- ☐ Ensuring transfer/generalization of a skill/concept
- ☐ Cognitive Behavior Modification
- ☐ First Line modifications

The Keys to Teaching Students Who Have Problems

These keys are exactly the same keys that we discussed in the section on organizing the behavioral environment. In this section, we have used examples keyed to learning content rather than to learning behavior.

Explicitness

Explicitness is the first key to teaching students with disabilities, because they do not learn inductively. Making certain to tell the content/concept explicitly to the student with disabilities is crucial in organizing your teaching for him.

Suppose that the content/concept you want to teach is that family is the most important value in the Hispanic culture. You might have asked your students to read three short stories about Hispanic people, construct a Venn diagram, and then write an essay on the primary value of Hispanic people. Your regular ed kids would flower under this type of assignment. Your student with special needs would flounder because it requires inductive thinking.

In contrast to this lesson for regular students, if you want the student with problems to learn that Hispanic people value family, tell him, "The most important value to Hispanic people is family." Then you might have him read the stories and look for examples illustrating the concept, or you might

show him the examples that illustrate the concept. He won't "get it" if you expect him to discover it for himself inductively.

Repetition

The second key to teaching students who have special needs is repetition. Researchers report that children without disabilities must be exposed to something many times before they learn it. Children who have special needs may need 10 times as many or a hundred times as many repetitions of new content before they learn it. Unless we expose students who have special needs to important information over and over and over and over and over, they aren't going to learn it. If they could learn in a typical number of repetitions, they wouldn't be students who had problems; they would be typical students. Students with learning problems require endless repetition.

Millie was delighted when she learned how to make HyperCard stacks on computer. HyperCard programs provide us with ways to ensure adequate repetition for our special needs students. The computer never gets cranky, tired, or frustrated when it has to give corrective feedback for the five hundredth time. Computer aided instruction is invaluable in working with students who have special needs.

Direct Instruction

There are five research supported techniques for teaching students with learning problems. A concept hierarchy of those techniques is in Figure 9.2.

Direct Instruction is one of the five research-supported ways of teaching students who have problems. We have all learned how to teach Direct Instruction lessons. For the purposes of this discussion, we'll use the definition of Direct Instruction that we like best: *Tell 'em what you're gonna teach 'em, teach 'em, and then tell 'em what you taught 'em.* That wraps it up nicely. There is nothing implicit or inductive in Direct Instruction.

Remember that part of the Direct Instruction model involves guided practice, or repetition of use of the concept/skill until it is mastered. Direct Instruction is explicit and repetitive.

Ensuring Transfer/Generalization of a Skill/Concept

An important part of Direct Instruction (or any instruction) for kids with special needs is ensuring transfer of a skill or generalization of a concept. Kids with special needs don't transfer skills or generalize concepts. When new teacher Lily Wong taught Brett that dogs were mammals because they had a four-chambered heart, were warm-blooded, had live babies, were

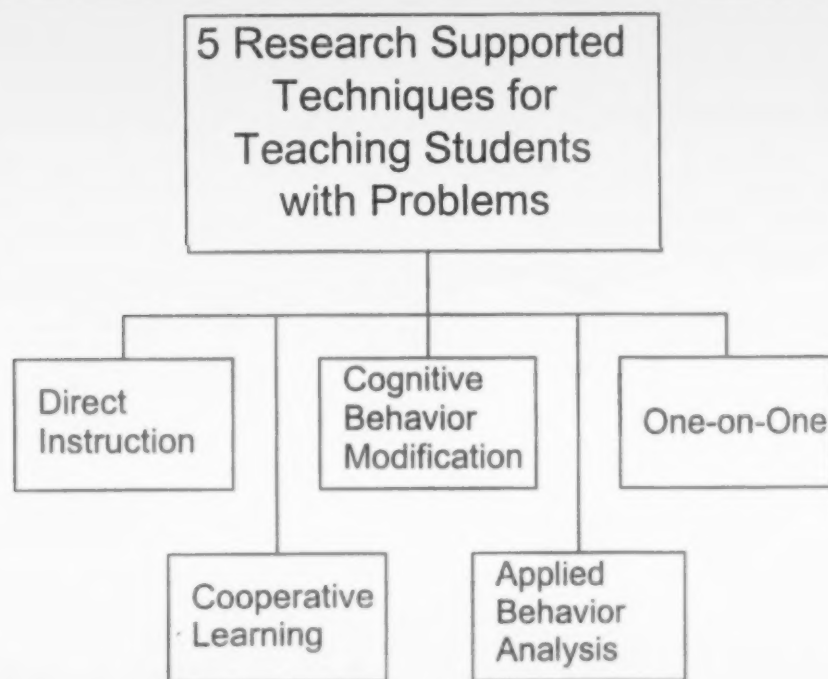


Figure 9.2. Five Research-Supported Techniques for Teaching Students With Problems

fur-bearing, and gave milk, she thought he would generalize that concept to cats. He didn't.

In special education, we use the MEMC Principle when we want students to generalize/transfer information. MEMC stands for *multiple exemplars in multiple contexts*. MEMC marries explicitness with repetition. Using the MEMC Principle, Lily explicitly taught Brett all of the animals that she wanted him to know were mammals.

Similarly, when Lily wanted Brett to learn to use an indentation to start a paragraph, she explicitly had to teach the skill to him in each subject and in every situation: multiple exemplars in multiple contexts.

Cognitive Behavior Modification

Cognitive Behavior Modification (CBM) is the special ed teacher's term for what general ed teachers call Strategy Instruction. CBM is the teaching model we use to teach a skill or strategy. The process is the same: Conduct a task analysis and then explicitly teach the task. The definition of CBM that we like is: *I do it, we do it, you do it.*

General ed teachers may not be as careful as special ed teachers to make their instruction explicit and repetitive. Here is the way a special ed teacher would approach CBM. You can see how explicit she is in her instruction.

1. Conduct a task analysis of the strategy.
2. Post the steps of the strategy.
3. Talk with the student about the strategy. Convince him that the way he approaches the strategy is inefficient. Show him the benefits to him of learning the new strategy. Secure his commitment to learning the new strategy.
4. Model the new strategy, stating aloud each step as you perform it.
5. Have him practice the strategy while you read aloud each step as he performs it. Repeat as necessary.
6. Have him practice the strategy while he reads aloud each step as he performs it. Repeat as necessary.
7. Have him practice the strategy while he whispers each step as he performs it. Repeat as necessary.
8. Have him practice the strategy while he subvocalizes each step as he performs it. Repeat as necessary until the skill is internalized.

You will note that CBM is both explicit and repetitive, the keys in organizing your teaching for students who have problems.

It is important to remember MEMC when you use CBM. Because a student has mastered a skill or a strategy in one context does not mean that he will know to use it or be able to use it in another context. For example, if you teach him the strategy of outlining a chapter in his social studies book, that does not mean that he will know to or be able to outline a chapter in his science book. You must use the MEMC Principle and teach him the skills/strategies you want him to use in each context in which you want him to use it.

Modifications

Millie classifies modifications into two families. She calls the first group First Line Modifications. First Line Modifications are those that are easily incorporated into all lessons for all students. She uses that term because she likens them to the first line of defense that is called out in time of war. Millie calls the second family Specific Modifications. Specific Modifications are those that are restricted to the student for whom they were intended. First Line Modifications consist of: The Big Ideas, emphasizing important points, graphic organizers, guides, teaching vocabulary, and mnemonics.

The Big Ideas

The Big Ideas are those huge, overlying ideas that pervade a particular discipline. For example, The Big Ideas in science are: *structures, models, cycles of change, stability, evolution, and scale*. Those six concepts pervade all of science education. The Big Ideas in history are: *problem, solution, outcome*. There are two kinds of problems: human rights and economics. There are five kinds of solutions: dominate, accommodate, move, innovate, and tolerate. There are three kinds of outcomes: the problem gets better, the problem gets worse, or a new problem arises. These Big Ideas drive all of history.

If you don't know The Big Ideas in a discipline, you can go to the standards created for that discipline by the flagship organizations in the discipline to find out what they are. In science, the document *Science for All Americans* explicitly states The Big Ideas. The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics and the National Council for the Social Studies have clearly stated their Big Ideas. Other disciplines may have standards that require you to tease out the half dozen or so Big Ideas.

The student with special needs requires explicit instruction in The Big Ideas and constant reference to them throughout his lessons. If all he knew when he left your class was The Big Ideas in each of the disciplines you teach, he would have gained something important.

Emphasizing Important Points

Emphasizing important points is an essential organizational tool in working with students who have difficulties. Students who have problems learning new information cannot discriminate between what information is important and what is not. If you told the story of the Boston Tea Party to your students, the general ed students might figure out that the important thing was that the colonists rebelled against the stamp tax being imposed upon them without their representation in the government that imposed it. The special student would think the brand of tea dumped in the bay was important and might altogether miss the idea of rebellion against taxation without representation.

Explicitly teach your students that you will emphasize important points by one of the following four strategies: (a) your repeating it three times verbatim; (b) your saying, "This is very important. Remember it"; (c) your having them repeat it back to you multiple times as a chorus; and (d) your having them repeat it to their seatmates, the ceiling, the floor, Ms. Pencil, Mr. Desk, and any other available person or object.

Graphic Organizers

Graphic organizers are very powerful tools in helping students with disabilities learn. We have thoroughly discussed graphic organizers in Chapter 7, in the section titled "The Teaching Act," and refer you to that discussion.

Guides

Guides are important tools in helping students who have problems get the most out of reading a chapter, watching a video, or listening to a lecture. Millie tested this notion with her college students. She showed a video and tested her students over it. The class average was 30% (the students knew that the test was not recorded in the grade book). The next week, she showed a video of like difficulty, but this time, she gave students a guide to help them recognize important points. This time, the test average (which they knew was not recorded in the grade book) was 80%. Made a believer out of her.

A textbook guide can be drawn directly from the questions at the end of the chapter. Have the student copy the questions and reread them before she starts reading the chapter so that she can identify the important ideas as she encounters them.

Highlighting

Set aside a copy of each textbook for your students who have disabilities. Go through the texts and highlight the most important material in each chapter. That way the students can spend their time learning what is important rather than trying to read and understand the entire chapter.

Explicitly Teaching Content Vocabulary

Explicitly teaching vocabulary in the content areas is a powerful strategy. General education students may pick up the new vocabulary words when they encounter them, but students with special needs require your explicit and repetitive instruction if they are to learn. We know that teaching vocabulary in the content areas is one of the best ways to improve reading ability and especially comprehension.

Mnemonics

Finally, mnemonic devices are the last of what Millie calls First Line Modifications. She first started teaching her students with mnemonic devices when she was teaching high school special ed. She read in Dear Abby

that Canadians are offended that we know so little about their country when they know so much about ours and we are such close neighbors both geographically and ideationally. The letter to Dear Abby recounted a survey in which almost none of the Americans surveyed could name the provinces and territories in Canada. Millie decided that her students' self-esteem would grow if she could teach them this information, and after they had mastered it, have them survey their parents, neighbors, and other students on how many of the provinces and territories they could name. The project was a wonderful success.

The particular mnemonic device that she used for that lesson was the Keyword strategy. In this strategy, the student is taught the target word and then pairs that with a keyword that sounds like the target word. A strong visual picture is then presented to accompany the keyword, and a story weaves all of the keywords together.

Here are the keywords, pictures (Figure 9.3), and story Millie used to teach the Canadian provinces and territories.

<u>Keywords</u>	<u>Target Words</u>
Yucky stuff	Yukon Territory
New vest	Northwest Territory
B. C. tablet	British Columbia
Albert Gore	Alberta
Sash to catch a swan	Saskatchewan
Manischewitz	Manitoba
On a terrace	Ontario
Ice cubes	Quebec
Newfoundland dog	Newfoundland
Prince Edward	Prince Edward Island
New Scottie	Nova Scotia
Brunswick stew	New Brunswick

Here is the story that accompanies the keyword pictures: I got yucky stuff on my new vest! I was so upset, that I had to take a B.C.TM Tablet. Here's how it happened: Albert Gore invited me to his condo for a wine cooler. What started the disaster was that he had to use his sash to catch a swan. He had to catch the swan because it stole the bottle of ManischewitzTM wine that he left on a terrace when he went to get some ice cubes for our glasses. He was running so fast that he tripped over his Newfoundland dog, Prince Edward. This caused him to fall forward over his new Scottie, who was eating a bowl of Brunswick stew. The bowl of stew flipped up into the air and landed all over my new vest, making it yucky and giving me a headache!



Figure 9.3. Keyword Mnemonic Device

3CROD and Graphing

The term 3CROD refers to Close Continuous Contact with Relevant Outcome Data. That simply means to monitor constantly the student's progress by a testing, prescribing, teaching cycle. In special ed, we say, "If you ain't tested it, you ain't taught it." This cycle of testing, prescribing, and teaching is known by a variety of names—Diagnostic Teaching, Precision Teaching, Prescriptive Teaching—but it all boils down to the same thing: Test the child to find out what she doesn't know, teach it to her by Direct

Instruction or CBM, and then test her to see if she learned it. If she didn't, reteach the part she didn't learn.

An integral part of 3CROD is graphing. Graphing a child's progress is an amazingly powerful way to motivate her. When they start graphing their children's performance, interns constantly tell us it improves. "A boy in my class didn't care about anything, but when I started graphing his performance, he came up to me and asked when we could work together again so he could improve his graph." We're not making this up. We hear it all the time! It is hard to understand why all teachers don't use this strong tool for organizing their teaching.

Summary

In this section of the chapter, we have covered ways to modify the teaching environment for students who have learning and behavior problems. Specifically, we have covered the following items. Check off those you feel prepared to use. Reread any which you don't feel competent to try.

- ☐ The keys to teaching students who have problems
- ☐ Direct Instruction
- ☐ Ensuring transfer/generalization of a skill/concept
- ☐ Cognitive Behavior Modification
- ☐ First Line Modifications

DEVELOPING THE SUPPORT SYSTEM COMMUNICATION

In the last section, we discussed ways to organize the learning environment for students who have learning and behavior problems. In this section, we will discuss how to organize the support system for students who have learning and behavior problems. Specifically, we will discuss the use of:

- ☐ Memo books
- ☐ Checklists

Memo Books

Confusion can reign when a student who has learning or behavior problems moves about among special ed classes, general ed classes, and home. Poor communication becomes a problem that allows the student to

manipulate his general ed teachers, special ed teachers, and home. How many of us have faced a student in a pull-out program who has told us, "My other teacher told me to do this," and we haven't been able to confirm or deny his assertion?

The answer to the problem is simple: a memo book. Lily Wong required each of her special students to carry a memo book in his pocket at all-times. When her student Julio entered the general ed class, the first thing his teacher did was ask for his memo book. The general education teacher checked all entries since her last entry. At the end of the period, she noted anything that she wanted either the special ed teacher or the parents to know. The special ed teacher did the same thing, and the parents also participated. In this way, everyone knew what was going on everywhere else, and manipulation of adults became much more difficult.

Checklists

When you are organizing for children with special needs, it is essential to organize for communicating with parents about how to help their children. A checklist helps you do this.

Send a checklist home with the child with special needs with each assignment. Don't assume that the parent already knows how you want her to help the child. Do you want her to dictate spelling words to the child? Write that on your checklist. Do you want her to have the child spell the words aloud to her three times? Write that on your checklist. Most parents want to help their kids; they just don't know what you expect. A checklist will ensure that you have communicated to the parent how to help the child.

Summary

In this section, we discussed how to organize the support system for the student who has special needs. If you feel ready to try using these techniques, check them off and move on to the next chapter.

- ☐ Memo books
- ☐ Checklists

RECOMMENDED READING

Goldstein, A. P. (1988). *The Prepare Curriculum: Teaching prosocial competencies*. Champaign, IL: Research Press.

10

WORKING WITH PARENTS

Many teachers are uncomfortable working with parents. Once you organize yourself for working with parents, you will find that much of your anxiety will evaporate. This chapter will prepare you for your parent interactions.

WRITING TO PARENTS

In the last chapter, we discussed organizing for working with the student who has learning and behavior problems. The parents of the student who has learning and behavior problems are often the parents to whom a teacher must communicate unpleasant information. Therefore, organizing for writing to parents is a crucial task. In this section, we will cover:

- ☐ Starting with accolades
- ☐ Making assertions
- ☐ The blueprint paragraph
- ☐ Citing evidence and using reasoning
- ☐ Summarizing

Starting With Accolades

When you need to write to parents about a problem, start with accolades to the child. Starting with favorable comments softens the impact of the unpleasant news that may follow. Starting with accolades is an important part of the organizational formula for writing to parents.

Making Assertions

After the initial accolades, state your assertion. An assertion is your conclusion. Here's an example: Kat taught seventh grade English. When Kat was concerned about Cheryl's failure to bring homework to school, she began the letter to Cheryl's parents with accolades, and then stated, "I need for you to read in Cheryl's memo book every afternoon to find out what homework she has. I then need you to help her with her homework and make certain that she brings it to school the next day."

The Blueprint Paragraph

After making the assertion, write a blueprint paragraph. The blueprint paragraph tells the parents exactly what evidence/reasoning you are going to present. Here is the blueprint paragraph that Kat wrote to Cheryl's parents: "First, I will report the number of times that Cheryl has had homework to do this quarter. Second, I will report the number of times that she has turned in her homework. Third, I will then report the number of times that she has not turned in her homework. Fourth, I will report the percentage of the grade that homework represents. Finally, I will summarize the information."

Note that in the blueprint paragraph, we use the terms first, second, third, and so on. That helps the readers organize their minds to read the information.

Citing Evidence and Using Reasoning

Evidence refers to the facts that you present. The facts must be empirical. Think of evidence as the bricks in a wall. Each brick is a piece of evidence. In contrast to evidence, reasoning refers to the way you organize and treat the evidence in order to come to a conclusion, or, as we said earlier, an assertion. You can think of reasoning as the mortar that holds the bricks together to form the wall. The wall is the assertion you make from the bricks and the mortar.

When you are citing evidence, stick to the facts for which you can provide documented records. Be exact. Don't say, "Cheryl doesn't turn in her homework half the time." State only what you can document with exact figures. In the case of Cheryl, Kat could document evidence that resulted in the following:

"Of the 32 days this quarter, I have assigned homework 25 days. The homework assignments have ranged from answering the questions in the grammar book to writing a story to writing a newspaper article. I did not give two homework assignments due on any one day.

"Cheryl turned in her homework on 7 of the 25 days in which she had homework to do. She did not turn in homework on 18 of the 25 days. I asked her each morning for her homework. For the past week, I have written down her explanations for not having her homework. She responded 'I forgot,' on two occasions; 'We went to my cousin's house,' on one occasion; and 'My mom wouldn't help me and I couldn't do it by myself,' on two occasions. When Cheryl has not done her homework, she is unable to participate in class activities because she is not prepared.

"Of the seven times that Cheryl did turn in homework, the homework was late two times. Of the two times, one homework assignment was turned in 1 day late, and the other was turned in 6 days late. By being late, she was unable to participate in the class activities for which the homework prepared the students. The opportunity for learning the information with the group is gone when Cheryl is as much as 1 day late with her homework.

"The homework assignments to date represent 25% of Cheryl's grade. With 25 of 32 assignments not handed in, and with two of the five assignments receiving only half credit for being late, Cheryl's homework brings her overall grade average down to a 57 out of 100 possible points. She could be passing the class if she were bringing her homework assignments to school completed and on time."

Summarizing

Kat then summarized by writing: "Therefore, as I stated at the beginning of the letter, I need for you to read in Cheryl's memo book every afternoon to find out what homework she has. I then need you to help her with her homework and make certain that she brings it to school the next day."

As you can see, Kat laid out the evidence for the parents clearly and concisely. She left nothing to conjecture. She used reasoning to construct an argument leading to her assertion. She began with the assertion, and ended with a summary paragraph.

Cheryl's parents may not be happy that Kat wrote to them, and they may not help to ensure that their daughter does her homework, but Kat can provide solid evidence to her principal that she tried to work with the parents in a very professional way.

Summary

In this section, we have discussed organizing your writing to communicate more effectively with parents. Specifically, we discussed the following items. Check off each item that you feel confident using, and reread those about which you feel uncertain.

- ☐ Starting with accolades
- ☐ Making assertions
- ☐ The blueprint paragraph
- ☐ Citing evidence and using reasoning
- ☐ Summarizing

THE PARENT CONFERENCE

In the last section, we discussed writing a letter to parents. In this section, we will discuss organizing for the parent conference. Specifically, we will discuss:

- ☐ Using an agenda for the routine conference
- ☐ Praise and problem cards
- ☐ Using an agenda for the problem conference

Using an Agenda for the Routine Conference

Research tells us that most teachers dread parent conferences and working with parents. The teacher's dread is born of a feeling of uncertainty of what is expected of her in a parent conference. A couple of simple organizational strategies will reduce the anxiety associated with the parent conference.

The purpose of the parent conference will dictate what you will need to do to organize for it. We will start by addressing how to organize for a routine parent conference that is required by the school for all parents.

For the routine parent conference, first write up an agenda (Figure 10.1). This is essential, and something that teachers are not used to doing.

Purpose: Required conference for receiving student's report card:

1. To inform parent of student's strengths and areas of concern.
 2. To tell parent how to support child's education.
 - a. How student is performing academically
 - b. How parent can help student's academic performance
 - c. How student is performing behaviorally
 - d. How parent can help student improve behavior
 - e. Scheduling follow-up conference if desired
-

Figure 10.1. Fall Parent Conference Agenda

The agenda should include the purpose of the meeting and the steps that you will follow in conducting the meeting. You will post the agenda on the table during the meeting and refer to it as you move from step to step through it during the meeting.

If the parents stray away from the agenda, refocus them by pointing to the agenda and saying, "Mr. and Mrs. Lake, I'd be happy to discuss this issue with you later, but in order to stay on schedule today, we have to stay with the agenda. If you'd like to discuss this issue further, we'll make an appointment before you leave this afternoon."

Second, write up an elaborated agenda (Figure 10.2). Send a copy of the elaborated agenda home to the parents so that they will know what to expect. This will also allow them to prepare themselves with information that you might require.

On the table where you conduct your conference (and do sit at a table with the parent, not behind your desk) display sample copies of excellent, average, and poor work in a variety of subject areas (Figure 10.3). Of course, the papers must have the names removed. You may wish to use papers from a previous year or from another teacher's class so that no parent can identify their child's (or another child's) work.

For each student, have a folder of work samples ready. You should have marked these papers with a colored pen so that the strengths and problem areas are immediately observable. Point out and discuss the strengths first. Try to find at least three positive things to share. Then point out one or two things that the child most needs to improve.

Finally, give the parent a list of the child's strengths and problem areas in the academic arena and a list of three things that she can do to help her child improve academic performance (Figure 10.4).

Dear Parent,

As you know, it's time for our fall parent conference! You must come to this conference to get your child's report card. The conferences are limited to fifteen minutes. If we need more time to talk, we'll need to set up another meeting for next week.

Here's the agenda for this conference:

1. First, we'll talk about your child's academic performance. I'll show you samples of excellent, average, and poor work from other third graders. Then I'll show you a sample of your child's work so we can compare your child's progress with that of other students.
2. Next, I'll tell you from one to three specific ways you can help your child increase academic performance.
3. Next, we'll talk about your child's behavior. I will tell you your child's strengths and problem areas.
4. Then I'll tell you from one to three specific ways you can help your child improve in the area of behavior.
5. Finally, I'll ask you if you want to schedule a follow-up meeting to discuss any concerns you may have.

Thanks for helping me keep our parent conferences on schedule!

Sincerely,

Figure 10.2. Fall Parent Conference

Praise and Problem Cards

Next, discuss the child's behavior. In advance, prepare index cards demonstrating positive aspects of the child's behavior and cards demonstrating areas that are of concern (Figure 10.5). Make the positive cards one color, and the concern area cards another color. Present the positive cards one at a time, discussing each. Then present the concern area cards one at a time, discussing each. Finally, review the positive cards again, gather up all the cards, and give them to the parents (de Bono's hats would suggest that you use yellow for praise cards and gray for concern cards).

Suggest that the parent display the cards on the refrigerator so both the parents and the child are constantly reminded of the child's strengths and areas targeted for growth.

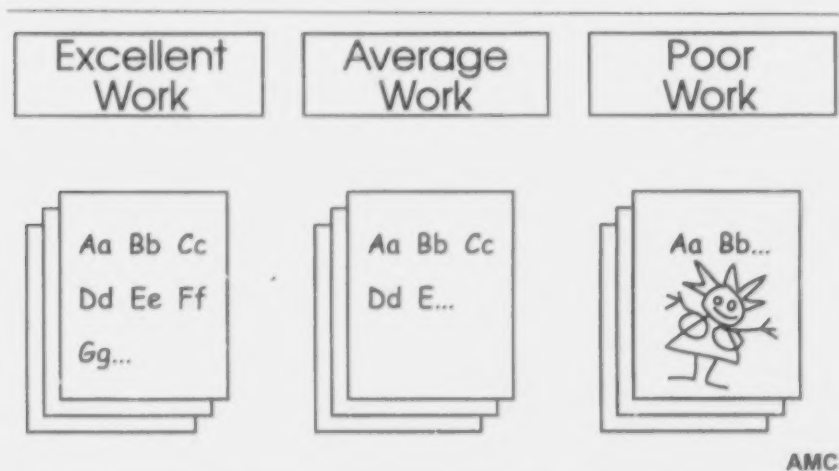


Figure 10.3. Samples of Student Achievement

Tina's Academic Strengths

1. Tina has many good ideas in social studies.
2. Tina is a strong speller.
3. Tina can multiply and divide accurately.

Tina's Problem Areas

1. Tina has trouble understanding word problems in math.

How Parents can help Tina improve her understanding of word problems in math:

1. Each night, ask to see the math that Tina did at school that day. Go over every word problem with her, both those she missed and those she did correctly. Make certain that she understands why she missed the ones she missed, and how to do them correctly.
2. When it's time for Tina to do her math homework, sit down at the table with her. Have Tina tell you how she is working each problem and why she's doing the things she's doing to work it.
3. Have Tina draw pictures to represent word problems. If the pictures show that she doesn't understand how to do the problem, show her how to do it correctly.

Figure 10.4. Fall Parent Conference: Academic Strengths, Problems, Recommendations

Strength <i>turns in all work on time</i>	Strength Area for Growth <i>needs to improve organizational skills</i>
Strength <i>is eager to help others</i>	Strength Area for Growth <i>needs to be more patient</i>
Strength <i>demonstrates strong leadership skills</i>	Strength Area for Growth <i>needs to accept correction more positively</i>
Strength <i>demonstrates strong creativity</i>	
Strength <i>shares with others</i>	

Figure 10.5. Praise and Problem Cards

Problem:	Tomas doesn't turn in homework
Conference purpose:	Increase frequency with which Tomas turns in homework

Teacher establishes rapport by serving coffee and discussing Tomas's strengths.

1. Teacher defines problem.
 2. Parent provides information about problem.
 3. Parent and teacher generate possible solutions.
 4. Parent and teacher select solution and write it down in contract form.
 5. Parent, teacher, and Tomas commit to implementing solution and keeping data. Parent, teacher, and Tomas sign contract.
 6. Parent and teacher schedule a follow-up meeting within 2 weeks.
-

Figure 10.6. Parent Problem Conference Agenda

Using an Agenda for the Problem Conference

If the conference is not a routine one, but is necessary to deal with a problem, you'll need to follow a different format for the agenda. The agenda still needs to have a goal and the steps you intend to follow at the meeting; however, the steps are different for a problem conference than for a routine one (Figure 10.6).

The first step in the problem agenda is stating the problem and explaining why it is a problem. For example, John told a parent, "The problem that Tomas is having is that he is not doing his homework in math. Students need lots of practice with math problems before they master how to do them. The students who are doing their math homework are mastering the process. Because he is not doing his math homework, Tomas is falling farther and farther behind."

The second step in the problem agenda is asking the parents if they can provide any information about the problem. Sometimes parents can shed a whole new light on what is happening with the child.

The third step is exploring possible solutions to the problem. You propose some possible solutions, and ask the parents to propose some.

The fourth step is selecting one of the solution alternatives and writing it down in a contract form. The fifth step is for the teacher, the parents, and the student to make a commitment to implementing the solution by signing the contract.

Dear Mrs. Fuentes,

Thank you for agreeing to meet with me on Tuesday at 3:00 to discuss a problem Tomas is having with his schoolwork. Here is the agenda I have prepared for the conference. If you would like to add anything to the agenda, please let me know.

Agenda for Conference

1. I will explain the problem of Tomas not doing his homework.
2. You will give me information about the problem. (Please talk to Tomas and be thinking what might be causing him to fail to do his homework.)
3. Together, we'll think up possible solutions to the problem. (Please be thinking about what you or I might do to help Tomas with this problem.)
4. Together, we'll select one solution.
5. Together, we'll commit ourselves to implementing the solution.
6. We'll schedule a follow-up meeting in two weeks.

Thanks for agreeing to meet with me! I'll see you Tuesday.

Sincerely,

Figure 10.7. Elaborated Problem Conference Agenda Sent to Parents

The last step is to agree on a follow-up contact within 2 weeks. The follow-up contact agreement is essential. It helps keep everyone honest. As teachers, it helps keep us focused on the behavior that we are trying to change. For the parent, it ensures vigilance in working on the problem at home. For the student, it motivates the child to improve, because Mom and Teacher are going to be checking with each other to see if the target behavior has improved.

After you have drawn up the agenda, you should send home an elaborated agenda (Figure 10.7) in the same manner that you did for the routine conference.

Summary

In this section, we have discussed organizing for the parent conference. Specifically, we have presented information related to the following items.

Check off each item about which you feel confident. If you are unsure about any item, reread it.

- ☐ Using an agenda for the routine conference
- ☐ Praise and problem cards
- ☐ Using an agenda for the problem conference

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

In the last section, we discussed organizing for the parent conference. In this section, we will discuss how to organize for involving parents in their children's education. Specifically, we will discuss the following items:

- ☐ Checklists for working with the child at home
- ☐ Creating the master list of parent volunteer tasks
- ☐ Having parents choose tasks
- ☐ Ensuring quality control
- ☐ The Volunteer Notebook

Checklists for Working With the Child at Home

Research tells us that many parents are afraid to work with their children on homework because they don't know what is expected of them. As we noted in Chapter 9, sending home a checklist with each assignment assures the parents that they are doing exactly the right things with their child. What an easy solution to a problem!

You can either have the students hand write the checklist or you can wordprocess it on the homework assignment if it's in worksheet form.

You can also send home a checklist for certain subjects at the beginning of the year. For example, in spelling, you may want the parents to follow the same procedure each week. In that case, one checklist sent home and placed on the refrigerator the first week of school should do the trick.

Creating the Master List of Parent Volunteer Tasks

When you have parents who are willing to be involved with their children's education in ways other than helping with homework, dance a jig in celebration. Unfortunately, many teachers eschew having parents who want to help with the class. The reason that such teachers ignore this gold

We need parents who will volunteer to do the following:

- ☐ Listen to individual students read
 - ☐ Listen to small groups of students read
 - ☐ Read to individual students
 - ☐ Read to small groups of students
 - ☐ Dictate sentences for individual students to write
 - ☐ Dictate sentences for small groups of students to write
 - ☐ Take dictation from individual students
 - ☐ Give students practice tests
 - ☐ Drill individual students on flash cards
 - ☐ Drill small groups of students on flash cards
 - ☐ Help individual students select library books
 - ☐ Help individual students with art projects
 - ☐ Record books for students with learning problems
 - ☐ Proofread and edit students' reports
-

Figure 10.8. Parent Volunteer Wish List

mine resource is the anxiety of not knowing what to have the parents do to help.

The first step in organizing for parent involvement is to create a master list of all of the tasks for which you could possibly use an extra pair of hands. The sky's the limit. Any wild idea you have can be included on the list. You may not have any parent volunteer to do some of the tasks, but you never know until you try! Millie once had a parent make 32 decorative pillows for the antique bathtub in her classroom. She could have lived without them, but she put them on her Parent Volunteer Wish List, and a parent decided to volunteer to make them. Figure 10.8 shows a master list that John used in his classroom.

Having Parents Choose Tasks

After you have constructed your master list of volunteer tasks, have the interested parents identify all of the tasks that they would like to do. Let them examine the book alone at first. Tell them to note any tasks about which they are not certain so that you can tell them more about what's involved with that particular task. Don't rush them.

Ensuring Quality Control

After the parents select their tasks, draw up a rubric for each one so that you can be sure that they will know how to do the task exactly as you want it done. Don't use any teacher jargon on the rubric. Write it so that someone with absolutely no knowledge of the teaching profession will understand it. If you write it in teacherese, you'll scare off tentative volunteers, who think, "I'm not smart enough to be a volunteer."

After you've developed the rubric, take the volunteers and the rubric and explicitly demonstrate to the volunteers exactly what you mean by each instruction on the rubric. Don't assume that the volunteers know how to operate the photocopying machine at all, much less that they know how to copy two one-sided documents to make them into one two-sided document. Don't assume that the volunteers know what you want when they are supposed to "work with Marleena on her sight words." Yes, it takes time to train volunteers, but it's time well invested. If you spend one hour teaching a volunteer how to do something that she can do for you one hour every week for 30 weeks, you have a 30:1 return on your time.

Note that you can also teach volunteers a task that they can then teach other volunteers in an "each one teach one" routine. If you teach one volunteer who teaches one other volunteer, and each performs the task for you one hour a week for 30 weeks, you have a 60:1 return on your time! Our stockbroker should do so well!

The Volunteer Notebook

Develop a Volunteer Notebook using our old friend the three-ring notebook. Your Volunteer Notebook should contain the master list of volunteer tasks. That way you don't have to go hunting it every time a volunteer inquires about working for you.

As you develop each rubric, place it in your Volunteer Notebook. You only have to develop a rubric as you need it. You will find that most of your volunteers will volunteer for the same half-dozen tasks, so that the first half-dozen rubrics you develop will serve you over and over again.

Your notebook should also serve as storage for your volunteers' name tags. We require all of our interns to wear name tags in their field placements. By making an official name tag for each parent and letting other teachers know that you have volunteers who will be wearing the name tags, you can

avoid an embarrassing situation when a colleague challenges a volunteer who is a strange face in the building.

In addition, having their own name tags gives volunteers an additional feeling of belonging to the school and your class.

We recommend that you also have parents log in the notebook the time they spend volunteering so that you can recognize their efforts at the end of the year.

In this section, we have discussed how to organize for using parent volunteers in the classroom. Specifically, we have discussed the following items. Check off any about which you now feel confident; reread any about which you remain uncertain.

- ☐ Checklists for working with the child at home
- ☐ Creating the master list of parent volunteer tasks
- ☐ Having parents choose tasks
- ☐ Ensuring quality control
- ☐ The Volunteer Notebook

11

REQUESTING ASSISTANCE

Hillary Rodham Clinton borrowed a wonderful old African proverb. She has made it a battle cry: It takes a village to raise a child. No teacher, no matter how organized, can possibly serve the many needs of students without plenty of assistance from others. By asking for assistance in an organized way, you will be more likely to get the help that you need.

Who receives the best service from the various offices in a school? Generally, it's the teacher who is organized and asks early for specific assistance. Teachers who appear scatterbrained will be at the bottom of everyone's priorities; when you act like a professional, other professionals will treat you like one, and being organized is part of acting like a professional.

DECIDING WHAT KIND OF HELP YOU NEED

- ☐ Things you need to ask for from the principal
- ☐ Things you need to ask for from the counselor
- ☐ Things you need to ask for from other teachers

Things You Need to Ask for From the Principal

Some schools keep a database of student information. The database can include everything from addresses to medical information to standardized test scores. In some schools, however, data such as individual students'

longitudinal standardized test scores are not routinely maintained. Organized teachers to the rescue! Many principals admit to being pushed by organized teachers to provide more and better services. But they admit this with smiles on their faces, because the teachers who are continually assertive for assistance for the harder-to-teach students are typically the best teachers in the building. So if your school doesn't keep such a database, begin lobbying your principal to do so!

In the past, a teacher had to take each student's folder and study each piece of information. That's a big task for an elementary teacher in a self-contained classroom with 24 children; it's a monumental task, an undoable task, for a secondary teacher with over 100 students. In fact, in this technological age, having to invest such time in examining student records is undefensible. By using a computer database, a school can record each student's records so that you can be given a printout of requested information on every student in your class. For example, you could ask for all of your students' standardized achievement test scores for the past 3 years, and have all that information on one piece of paper. You could even ask that that information be sorted from highest to lowest achievement score. Having that information before the first week of school would be of enormous help in setting up your heterogeneous cooperative groups in which you want a high-achieving student, a low-achieving student, and two average-achieving students in each group.

You could ask for a printout of your five students who scored the lowest on their achievement tests in the previous year, and have that information in one minute, rather than in the hours and hours it would take you to ferret out that information for yourself by studying every student's record. Having that information in advance of the school year would allow you to begin marshaling your resources and preparing for early intervention with those students.

Things You Need to Ask for From the Counselor

Ask your counselor to provide you with a list of your community's referral sources. For example, if you have a child whose parents are going through a divorce and the parents tell you that they know their child is having problems because of it, a list of referral sources would allow you to give them the name of an agency and a phone number that could help them by providing counseling or a support group for their child.

If you have a student who needs clothes but can't afford them, you could give the parents the name of a resource that could help. If you have parents who want to learn to speak English, you could provide them with the name

Dear Colleagues:

Here are some materials I have that you might want to borrow. I'll be glad to loan them to you to preview and/or use!

Lily Wong

- ☐ 8 U.S. geography game boards and materials
 - ☐ 3 Cooperative Learning books on social studies
 - ☐ 6 generic game boards and generic pieces for any subject
-

Figure 11.1. Checklist of Teaching Resources for Colleagues

of a community resource. Your counselor knows the community resources, but may not think to distribute a list of those resources to you unless you request them.

In addition, ask your counselor to give you a list of what types of counseling are provided at school and what services are available. Does the counselor offer group counseling to kids who are experiencing divorce? Individual counseling? What about social skills training for shy children? Mediation training to teach kids how to solve playground conflicts? Training to implement a no tolerance program toward bullying? Assistance in working out a problem between you and a parent?

Suggest to the counselor that other teachers would appreciate having such a list, too.

Things You Need to Ask for From Other Teachers

If you are a new teacher, ask your grade level colleagues to supply you with a list of field trips and guest speakers that are commonly employed for your grade. Ask your colleagues to share with you outstanding materials that they may have, and be sure to share yours with them, too, by providing them with a list of things you have in which you think they might be interested. A sample of a list you might provide is in Figure 11.1.

Your special education teacher and 504 coordinator will supply you with a list of IEP modifications that you must make for each child; however, ask them to make a one-page master list of the modifications required for all of the students in your class requiring modifications. It's a dynamite tool that will allow you to tell at a glance how many copies of modified assignments to photocopy and what needs to be done for whom. Figure 11.2 shows a sample of one.

<i>Modification</i>	<i>Jasmine</i>	<i>Eric</i>	<i>Samuel</i>	<i>Cheryl</i>	<i>Brad</i>
Teacher Instruction					
preteach vocabulary	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
teach Big Ideas	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
graphic organizers	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
lecture guides	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
emphasize important points	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
mnemonics	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
take to special class					✓
Assignments					
reading guides	✓		✓		
reduced		✓			
extra time	✓		✓		✓
alternative				✓	
oral				✓	
peer helper	✓		✓		
teacher's aide				✓	
take to special class				✓	✓
Textbooks					
highlighted	✓	✓	✓		✓
read by peer helper					
read by teacher's aide				✓	
tape recorded					
alternate					
Tests					
multiple choice only	✓	✓	✓	✓	
reduce 4 choices to 2	✓	✓	✓		
reduce # problems	✓		✓		
simplify wording				✓	
test only Big Ideas				✓	
Graph improvement	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Figure 11.2. IEP Modifications Checklist

Summary

In this section we identified some things you need to request from other professionals. Specifically, we suggested:

- ☐ Things you need to ask for from the principal
- ☐ Things you need to ask for from the counselor
- ☐ Things you need to ask for from other teachers

ORGANIZING TO GET THE HELP YOU NEED

In the last section, we discussed the types of assistance you need from other staff in order to help you be a more organized teacher. In this section, we will present two ways to see that you get the help you need. Specifically, we will discuss:

- ☐ Checklists
- ☐ Memos

Checklists

Checklists are a powerful tool to help you get the assistance you need from others. By giving a requestee a checklist, you accomplish several things. First, you make absolutely certain that the person knows what you need done. Second, you provide a concrete reminder to them that remains after you have walked out of the office. In other words, you may be out of sight, but your request is not out of mind. Third, you show that your request is serious and that you have given much consideration to it. Fourth, you communicate to others that you are a well-organized professional.

Give the person a copy of the checklist and let them see that you have a copy, too. This is important, and you'll see why in a minute. Then ask, "When may I expect to receive this material?" When they give you a date, jot it down on your copy of the checklist so they see you do it. This will carry the powerful message that you take their word seriously, and it will set the stage for what we will tell you about in the next section.

Figure 11.3 gives examples of checklists you might give your principal and counselor.

Memos

Several days before the date that the principal or counselor told you that you could expect the information you requested, follow up with a memo. Using e-mail if your school has it, or a note pad if you don't have e-mail, send a memo reminding them that you are looking forward to receiving the information. Don't be pushy or arrogant; be warm and friendly, but insis-

Aug. 13

Dear Ms. Griego,

Help! In order to be the most effective teacher I can be, I need the following info from your office in database form. Please help me secure it ASAP so I can do a bang-up job for our kids!

Thanks!

Lily Wong

- ☐ Students' standardized test data by subject for past three years, sorted by highest reading score to lowest
 - ☐ Parents' names
 - ☐ Addresses & telephone numbers
 - ☐ Special class placements
-

Aug. 13

Dear Ms. Weiderstein,

Help! In order to be the most effective teacher I can be, I need the following info from your office in database form. Please help me secure it ASAP so I can do a bang-up job for our kids!

Thanks!

Lily Wong

- ☐ List of free/inexpensive community resources
 - ☐ List of kinds of counseling you/others provide at our school
 - ☐ List of services you provide for teachers
 - ☐ Information on my students that you think I should know
-

Figure 11.3. Checklists for Requests for Assistance

tent. By writing something like, "I'll be a more organized and effective teacher, and the kids will ultimately benefit from your helping me get this information!" your message will come across without sounding like you are hostile.

The day before, drop by the office and casually mention that you'll see them tomorrow when you come to pick up the information they've prepared for you.

Summary

In this section, we discussed ways to make certain that your requests for assistance in becoming a more organized teacher are honored. Specifically, we have discussed:

- ☐ Checklists
- ☐ Memos

12

ORGANIZATIONAL STRATEGIES FOR YOUR SOUL

In the preceding chapters, we offered you (a) very simple concrete strategies of organizing your time, money, and objects; and (b) more complex strategies of organizing your decision making, planning, and teaching. In this final chapter, we want you to take a quantum leap from those types of strategies and begin thinking of what might be called meta-organizational strategies, or organizational strategies by which to organize organizational strategies. Steven Covey calls these topics third and fourth generational strategies. As our chapter title reflects, we think of them as organizational strategies for your soul.

We have chosen to break from the pattern of the previous chapters and not use a checklist, because the soul doesn't seem to us very amenable to breaking down into checklists. Therefore, we will take a more holistic approach to talking about the soul.

You begin the organizational strategy for your soul by assessing your value system (a) as a teacher and (b) as a human being. What is your core value as a teacher? As a human being? If your core teacher value is to become a more caring teacher, then start with that one teaching value. If your core teacher value is to become a more effective teacher, then start with that one teaching value. Whatever your core teaching value is, write it in the center

of a piece of paper and draw a bull's eye around it. Then on a second paper, write your core value as a human being outside of your teaching life. Is your core nonteaching life value being emotionally available for your significant other? Is your core value being trustworthy? Nurturing to your children? Whatever that one value is, write it in the middle of a piece of paper and draw a bull's eye around it (of course, you may have the same value in both your professional and out-of-school domains, and that's fine).

Once you've decided on your core teacher value and your core value in your life outside of school, draw three rings around the bull's eyes. In the first ring, write down at least five things that you can do **TODAY** to enact your core values. Keep them simple and doable. If your core value is to be a more caring teacher, you might write down such things as "hold a child's face in my hands, look intently into her eyes, and tell her that she means the world to me," "write a note to a child who is having a problem, and encourage him to persevere," and "ask a child whom I have embarrassed by my sharpness to forgive me." Then do those things today. In the second circle around the bull's eye, write three things that can't be accomplished today to implement that value, but that can be accomplished within one week. For example you might write, "take cookies to the home of a child whose family is in distress," "make a home visit to the homes of the three children who are at the bottom of the class in popularity," and "hand-write and mail postcards to each of my students telling them one thing about them I really appreciate." Then start implementing those activities.

In the third circle, write three things that you can't accomplish in one week, but you can accomplish in one month. For example, you might write, "teach my kids conflict resolution skills," "develop and implement a strategy to get students to embrace the three least popular children in the class," and "make and bring a lunch to share each day with one individual student." A drawing of what we have in mind is in Figure 12.1.

Third-circle tasks sound like a lot of work. They are. Third-circle tasks should require a high degree of commitment. So where are you going to find the time? Kayla Wade, a second grade teacher, said, "You make time to do the important things. Period. If it's important to you, you do it. Everyone has the same number of hours in the day. Make them count."

Steven Covey explains that there are two dimensions to how we spend our time: urgency and importance. Tasks can be urgent and important, urgent but not important, not urgent but important, and not urgent and not important. Stop and create a diagram that will show these four combinations of the two dimensions. It will help you understand the rest of this chapter.

An example of urgent and important is taking care of a child who is bleeding profusely. An example of urgent but not important is getting

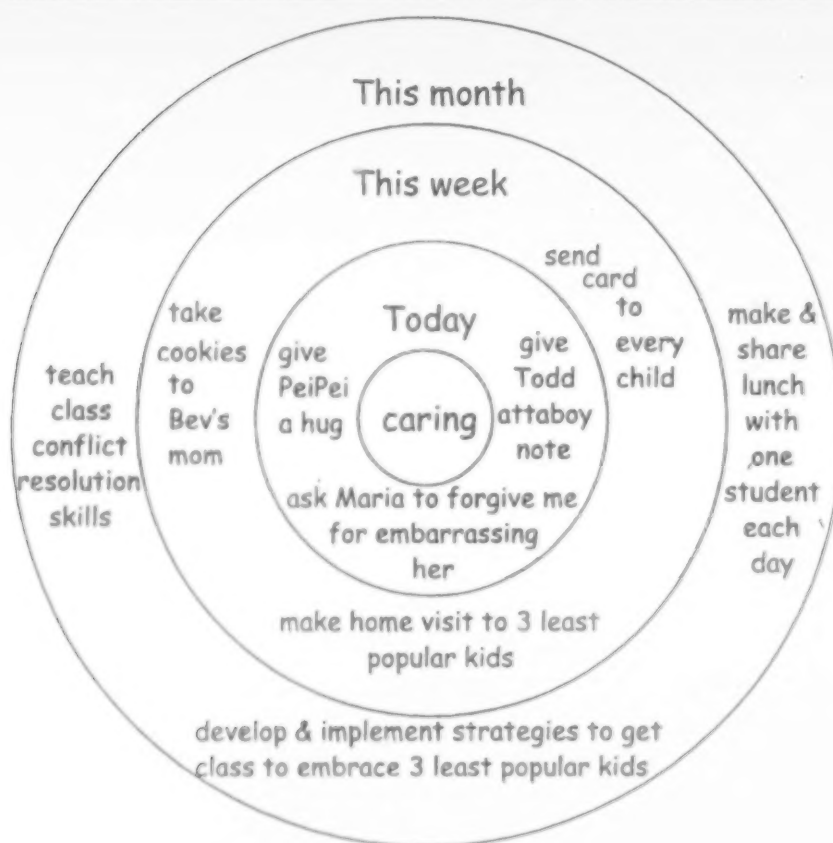


Figure 12.1. Target of Organizing for Your Soul

attendance taken when the attendance aide is standing at the door waiting for it. An example of not urgent and not important is flipping through old stacks of educational supply catalogs. An example of not urgent but important is baking cookies and taking them to the home of a student whose family is in distress.

Covey explains that we spend far too much of our time dealing with urgent matters, be they important or not important. If we're disorganized, we find ourselves overwhelmed by all the things we must do immediately (urgent, whether important, like stopping a hemorrhage, or not important, like taking attendance), so we don't have time to do the *not* urgent, but important things.

Covey explains that the first step in becoming a person who focuses on important things is to assess our values. Then we must commit ourselves to spending the lion's share of our time doing those things that are important

and not urgent. If we're taking care of the things that are important but not urgent, then far fewer things will become urgent. In other words, if you spend time doing the important but not urgent task of creating a caring community in your classroom, then you'll have to spend far less time doing the important and urgent task of stopping one of your students from beating another one of your students into a bloody pulp on the playground. We've created pie charts (Figure 12.2) to help you visualize moving from where you are to where you want to be in the urgency and importance typology.

A crucial move that will help you make time to do important but not urgent tasks is to take Don Aslett's advice. In *Clutter's Last Stand*, Aslett explains that negative people clutter up our lives and bad habits clutter up our lives. One bad habit that is a life clutterer is gossip. Another is smoking. Aslett says that even junk food is a bad habit that clutters up our lives.

If we're going to be authentic Time Stealer Tamers, we must tame ourselves, our very souls. If you smoke, stop. If you eat junk food, give it up. And go cold turkey on the gossip. Don't let those things waste your valuable time.

As for negative people, are there any wasting the precious minutes of your life? Junk them. Sounds outrageous? It's necessary. Divest your life of negative people.

Some school faculties have a negative teacher, or two, or three. These folks seem to seek out each other. A synergy takes place that makes the group more negative than any one of the individuals is alone. This kind of negative behavior is contagious! It catches! Don't risk cluttering up your life with a Time Stealer like negativism.

Once you eliminate the negative people from your life and your own negative habits from your life, you can begin to create a school environment that will nourish your soul. Research tells us that the best way to prevent burnout is to create a supporting, nurturing network of fellow teachers. A very simple way to start creating a nurturing network is by acts of kindness. Kindness to colleagues is a virtue that is lacking in many schools.

Dr. Rosemary Grant conducted research on acts of kindness that teachers performed for each other. As she interviewed teachers, they said, "Something kind that I've observed another teacher do? Forget it! I can't think of any! But boy can I tell you of mean acts that I've seen teachers do to each other!" The major finding of Dr. Grant's work was that about the only time teachers do something kind for a colleague is in time of tragedy: a life-threatening illness of a daughter or son, the death of a spouse, and so on. Those are important and urgent acts. We think teachers should spend more time doing important but not urgent acts, that is, doing kindnesses for each other every day, for no special reason.

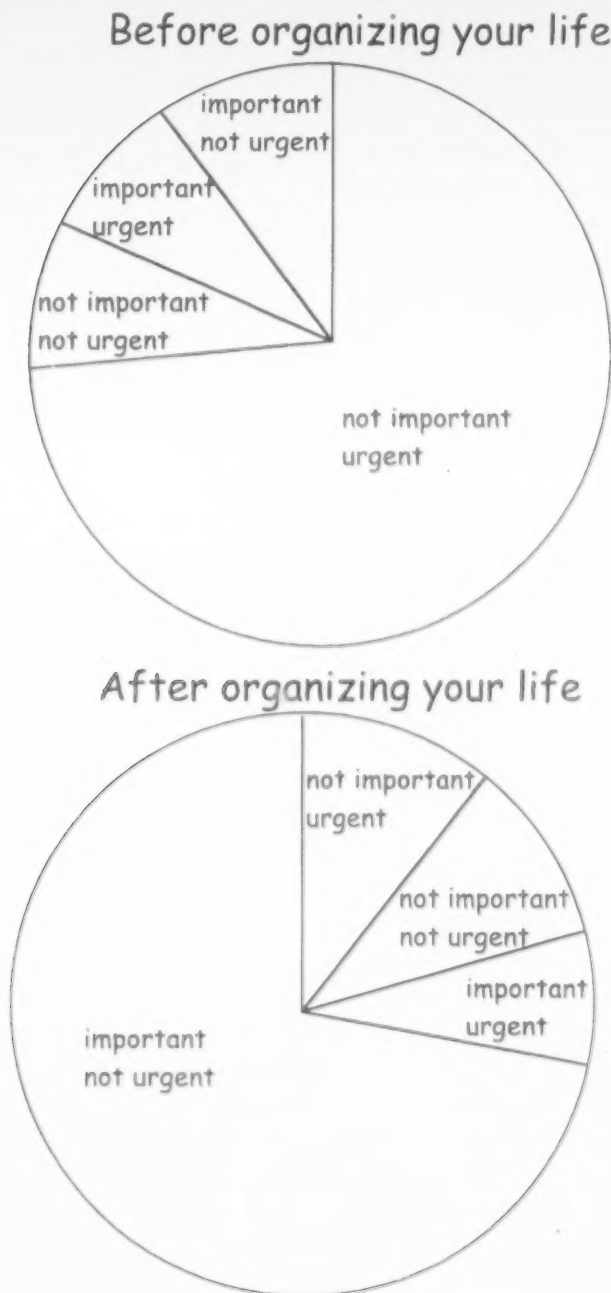


Figure 12.2. Pie Charts of Time Spent Now and After Organizing for Your Soul

Today, in order to start creating your more nurturing network, brew a cup of tea before school and take it to a teacher who is working down in her room. Drop a note in the box of a colleague telling him something that you appreciate about him. Make a copy of a great resource you've found and take it to a teacher who would like it. Move from doing urgent and important things to doing more not urgent but important things.

As you begin your new life as a Time Stealer Tamer, taming your time and memory, your materials, your decision making, teaching, and your very soul, know that we support your efforts, and we ask you to support our efforts at those things. One way you can do that is to send us your ideas and experiences as a Time Stealer Tamer. Please make a point to do that. Our e-mail addresses are in the Preface to the book.

Even more crucial than sending us your ideas and experiences, know that we support your efforts at becoming a Time Stealer Tamer in our hearts, and we ask you to support our efforts in your hearts. Because only in that way, only together, can we accomplish the not urgent but truly important things in the world.

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